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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE EARL OF ROCHESTER'S RECASTINGS OF  
OTHER WRITERS

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Earl of Rochester's Recastings of Other Writers, submitted by Maurice Yacowar in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to define the characteristic thought and technique of John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester, through a study of his minor works, in particular those in which Rochester is working from a known model. Although some of the minor poems to be discussed are not always accepted as the Earl's, they have some basis for attribution to the Earl and they are found to cohere with his major works. The close comparison of Rochester's recastings with the originals from which he worked shows Rochester to have been a careful reviser, sensitive to the fine shades of meaning in a phrase, sensitive to rhythmic effect, possessed with a particular tendency toward the dramatic, and with a greater sense of decorum than he is usually credited with. Most generally, the thesis attempts to separate the artist Rochester from the mass of spurious legend that has come to surround his name and to obscure the real import of his work.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Earl of Rochester now seems assured of a lasting place in English literature. Where once critical comment was made on Rochester's works only to introduce another report of his wild escapades--the reports often spurious--in the past twenty-five years the emphasis has shifted to his works. The legend of Rochester has lost its priority, if not all its interest; the Earl is now to be considered the chief poet and thinker among the Restoration wits.

Rochester is now known for two distinctly different kinds of poetry. His satire has won wide recommendation for its argumentative qualities, vigour, lucidity, straightforwardness and point.<sup>1</sup> "It was Rochester's peculiar gift in satire to hit upon and popularize the single descriptive epithet."<sup>2</sup> It was the Earl's unique irreverence that earned him the title of "A very profane wit."

But the same poet who wrote such harsh, venomous satires as "Ramble in St. James's Park" and Rochester's "Satire Against Marriage" was also capable of delicate lyrical verse, such as "Absent from thee I languish still" and "An Age, in her Embraces past."<sup>3</sup> But Rochester's genius or his interest to modern readers does not rely solely upon the impressive range of his poetic sentiments.

First of all, Rochester was more of a thinker than were the other court wits of the Restoration. Rochester's thinking continually inter-





ferred with his pleasures. In a letter to Mrs. Barry, his mistress and dramatic protégé, Rochester describes his impulse to write as "the pleasing Perplexity of endless Thought."<sup>4</sup> His relentless self-consciousness deprived Rochester of the simple pleasures that a less thoughtful sensualist would have enjoyed. However, it did not free Rochester from his appetite. Thus Rochester strikes a grotesque figure, hoist on his Hobbesian petard. Notorious for his libertinism, Rochester is not really a libertine but rather a prisoner of his reason on the one hand and his appetites on the other, compelled by his appetite to seek sensual activity but too cerebral to enjoy the activity, to lose himself in the momentary pleasures.<sup>5</sup>

Rochester also apprehended the abyss through which modern absurdists see man treading a blind, uncertain way. Rochester's verse abounds with observations of universal inconstancy, chaos, unreliability, and flux. Indeed the Earl frequently attempts to justify his libertinism by taking from this universal disorder the pattern for his love-life. Again the experience leaves the Earl empty, uncertain, or as has been said of Kafka's K., convinced he must believe but uncertain in what.

Of course, the dominant voice in Augustan literature is the persona. Irvin Ehrenpreis explains that "during an age when the notion of the self is collapsing like the notion of the soul, the concept of persona enables us to cling a little longer to a substantial ego."<sup>6</sup> Rochester was always masking, at balls, as Dr. Bendo, as a beggar--and even as a happy libertine.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the most important study of Rochester to date has been David Vieth's proof that Rochester is using a persona in "A Very Heroical Epistle in Answer to Ephelia," that the Earl is only ironically availing a sensual ethic, that to read Rochester accurately one must



ever keep an ear cocked for the possibility of an eiron.

The most important of Rochester's technical characteristics is his use of the persona. As one critic writes, "One of Rochester's chief characteristics is ambiguity of intention."<sup>8</sup> At least thirteen of the forty-two love poems that Berlind assigns to Rochester "exhibit some degree of satiric intention."<sup>9</sup> Rochester's use of the persona takes several interesting turns. First, Rochester is amazingly skillful in--and fond of--the use of a feminine voice.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, Rochester almost invariably uses the persona for purposes of self-satire:

one of Rochester's recurrent devices is to include himself in his satire. Repeatedly in the poems he is the forward observer who directs his fire onto his own position in order to destroy the enemy he lives with. And he himself is invariably the foremost enemy.<sup>11</sup>

Rochester's thought is best represented by his formal eulogy to the vision of chaos in the world, his best-known poem, "Upon Nothing." Basically Rochester claims in the poem that the only reality in the world is Nothing, matter being but an illusion. Rochester resolves that there is nothing in the world to be worshipped or rooted in. Nothing takes on an actual form in the poem, as if something.

The anxiety and despair that are the first result of this faithless view of the world seem shortly mitigated by the speaker's enthusiasm, by the thrill that the nihilist seems to find in his negativism. So Rochester at first seems playful in the poem. In stanza two he mimics the slow, deliberate, confident progress--albeit circular--of the formal philosopher:

E're time and place were, time and place were not,  
When Primitive Nothing something strait begot,  
Then all proceeded from the great united--What.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 77)



The philosopher tries to start at the beginning despite the fact that he knows nothing about the beginning, or even that there was a beginning. Everything material originated in nothing and so must inexorably return to nothingness:

Something, the Gen'ral Attribute of all,  
Sever'd from thee, it's sole Original,  
Into thy boundless self must undistinguish'd fall.

Yet something did thy mighty Pow'r command,  
And from thy fruitful emptiness's hand,  
Snatch'd Men, Beasts, Birds, Fire, Air and Land.

Matter, the wicked'st off-spring of thy Race,  
By Form assisted, flew from thy Embrace,  
And Rebel Light obscur'd thy reverend dusky Face.  
(Ibid.)

Matter, then, is evil, the corruption of the true state of nothingness.

The conventional symbol for reason, light, is the rebel against the fundamental universal--not just human--condition of darkness and chaos.

The rebellion by reason must fail:

With Form, and Matter, Time and Place did joyn,  
Body, thy Foe, with thee did Leagues combine,  
To spoil thy peaceful Realm, and ruine all thy Line.

But turn-Coat Time assists the Foe in vain,  
And, brib'd by thee, assists thy short-liv'd Reign,  
And to thy hungry Womb drives back thy Slaves again.

Tho' Mysteries are barr'd from Laick Eyes,  
And the Divine alone, with Warrant, pryces  
Into thy Bosom, where the truth in private lies,

Yet this of thee the wise may freely say,  
Thou from the virtuous nothing tak'st away,  
And to be part with thee the Wicked wisely pray.  
(Ibid., pp. 77-78)

With reason so useless, Rochester is impatient with pretenders to rational achievement, with the pedantic and the hypocritical:

Nothing who dwell'st with Fools in grave Disguise,  
For whom they rev'rend Shapes, and Forms devise,  
Lawn Sleeves, and Furs, and Gowns, when they like  
thee look wise.





French Truth, Dutch Prowess, Brittish Policy,  
Hibernian Learning, Scotch Civility,  
Spaniards Dispatch, Danes Wit, are mainly seen  
 in thee.

The great Man's Gratitude to his best Friend,  
 Kings Promises, Whores Vows, tow'rds thee they bend,  
 Flow swiftly into thee, and in thee ever end.  
 (Ibid., p. 79)

On this universal chaos and insecurity Rochester bases his most  
 common rationale for libertinism:

Nymph, unjustly you inveigh;  
 Love, like us, must Fate obey.  
 Since 'tis Nature's Law to Change,  
 Constancy alone is strange.  
 (Ibid., p. 10)

Because of the nothingness in the future Rochester places his stress upon  
 the immediate present, the thrill of the moment. Hence the intensity of  
 Rochester's lyric tone:

The Time that is to come is not,  
 How can it then be mine?  
 The present Moment's all my Lot,  
 And that, as fast as it is got,  
Phillis, is only thine.

Then talk not of Inconstancy,  
 False Hearts, and broken Vows;  
 If I, by Miracle, can be  
 This live-long Minute true to thee,  
 'Tis all that Heav'n allows.  
 (Ibid., p. 24)<sup>12</sup>

The common view of Rochester is a rather incoherent one still. He  
 is usually considered a poet of considerable potential who wasted his  
 talent on libels and pornography. From "Upon Nothing" and "A Satire  
 Against Mankind," Rochester has the reputation for skepticism, material-  
 ism, and atheism. From his political and social satires he has the  
 reputation of being a foul-mouthed and venomous libeller. Several  
 explicitly erotic poems have numbered Rochester among the most notorious  
 bawdy poets in the language. Yet what jars this picture is the completely



different voice heard in the lyrics, the tender, graceful, delicate voice of a dreaming lover. The common attempt to explain this disjunction is to dismiss Rochester as the prototypal aristocratic scribbler,<sup>13</sup> who could have written much fine poetry had his life been different; as the scribbler who wasted upon trivia poetic powers that might have been improved by discipline and by more conventional choice of subject-matter and philosophy.<sup>14</sup>

Vieth's explication of the "heroical" epistle to Ephelia has proved that Rochester refrains in his poetry from total commitment to the libertine's impropriety.<sup>15</sup> Vieth perceives, as Prinz and the earlier commentators did not, the apparent distancing between Rochester and his persona Bajazet:

How is it then, that I inconstant am?  
 He changes not, who always is the same.  
 In my dear self, I center ev'ry thing,  
 My Servants, Friends, My Mrs., and my King.  
 Nay Heav'n, and Earth, to that one poynt I bring.  
 Well manner'd, honest, generous, and stout,  
 Names by dull Fools, to plague Mankind found out;  
 Shou'd I regard I must myself constrain,  
 And 'tis my Maxim, to avoid all pain.  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 43)

Vieth's findings alert us to the subtlety of Rochester's work.

This thesis will concentrate on works that are usually ignored in discussion of Rochester, in particular those works in which Rochester is found to be working from a particular model, adapting another's work. This study of Rochester's recastings is intended to complete the definition of Rochester that Vieth's discovery of the libertine persona began. The recastings are an appropriate subject for such a study not just because of their number or their range, but because between the model and the revision falls the shadow of Rochester's own thought and inclinations. In thus studying Rochester's minor works, it is hoped that at least two



things will be demonstrated: the integrity and consistency of Rochester's views and his remarkable skills as a dramatist as well as a poet. It is also to be hoped that many of the misconceptions to which the Earl's notoriety has given rise may be dispelled, for a clearer view of the major minor poet of the late seventeenth century.

Chapter Two will survey Rochester's work in the new genre of imitation, the modernizing of works from the classics. Rochester will be found translating his classical writers, in particular Horace, with considerable liberty, personalising the sentiments as well as modernizing the tone. The liberties Rochester is the first to take in English translation set the model for later imitators or loose translators to follow.

Chapter Three will demonstrate the same personalising bent and the same remarkably fine eye for detail, the same fine, close workmanship, in Rochester's remodelling of poems by contemporaries as was found in his classical imitation.

Chapter Four will study Rochester's largest scale revision, Valentinian, a tragedy based on John Fletcher's drama of the same name. Rochester's revision of Valentinian will be found to be much different from what is commonly claimed, and his play a considerable improvement upon the original, better unified and--surprising for the legendary Earl--more decorous.

Where Chapters Three and Four discuss the technical qualities of Rochester's revisions, Chapter Five will consider the indications that the revisions give us of Rochester's thought. The revisions will be found to cohere with Mr. Ronald Berman's recent discussion of "Rochester and the Failure of the Senses."<sup>16</sup> An appendix will attempt to apply our





findings to the problem of verifying the authorship of several poems of doubtful inclusion in the Rochester canon.

This entire approach to Rochester is new. It assumes that Rochester is worth close study as a technician as well as as a representative of the materialist mind of the period. The works we shall study repay close scrutiny, despite the fact that they are ordinarily ignored in the consideration of Rochester. In his finest moments Rochester soars to the heights of a Dryden. Yet even the minor works have their beauties of craftsmanship. Moreover their thought is of a piece with the meaning of the major works, the works by which the Earl has been--often imprecisely--defined.





## CHAPTER II

### ROCHESTER AND THE ANCIENTS

Rochester's reworking of poems from the classics varies from literal translation to the freest form of translation, imitation. The Earl was more often an imitator than a translator; in imitation he found the perfect release for both his learning and his originality. Certainly the imitations and the translations alike testify to the Earl's poetic skills.

In "After Death nothing is, and nothing Death," Rochester seems too literal to be paraphrasing, yet too concise to be said to be providing a literal translation. His model is a speech by the chorus in Act III of Seneca's Troades.<sup>1</sup> As either a translation or a paraphrase, Rochester's version impresses with its vigorousness and compression. Into eighteen lines the Earl has compressed the spirit and thought of the considerably longer speech in Seneca:

After Death nothing is, and nothing Death;  
The utmost Limits of a gasp of Breath.  
Let the ambitious Zealot lay aside  
His hopes of Heav'n; (whose Faith is but his Pride)  
Let slavish Souls lay by their Fear,  
Nor be concern'd which way or where,  
After this life they shall be hurl'd:  
Dead, we become the Lumber of the World;  
And to that Mass of Matter shall be swept,  
Where things destroy'd, with things unborn are kept;  
Devouring time swallows us whole,  
Impartial Death confounds Body and Soul.  
For Hell, and the foul Fiend that rules  
The everlasting fiery G~~ao~~ls,  
Devis'd by Rogues, dreaded by Fools  
With his grim griesly Dog that keeps the Door,  
Are senseless Stories, idle Tales,  
Dreams, Whimseys, and no more.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 49)



Pinto titles the piece "The latter End of the Chorus of the second Act of Seneca's Troas, translated,"<sup>2</sup> but the part of the act was not specified until the edition of 1691. In Thorpe's facsimile reprint of the 1680 edition, the first publication of the poem, the poem is titled "Seneca's Troas, Act 2. Chorus," suggesting that the entire speech is being compressed or epitomised in Rochester's version.<sup>3</sup>

Rochester includes all the major images and thoughts of Seneca's version. But Rochester's compression is significant. He omits the rhetorical repetitions which in Seneca precede the assertion that "post mortem nihil est ipsaque more nihil." Rochester also omits Seneca's detailed references to the physical world. By restricting his imagery to the immediate context of the poem, Rochester effects a sense of urgency and a sense of certainty that would have been dissipated had he translated the entire speech. By omitting Seneca's rhetorical preamble, Seneca's dialectical progression towards his resolve, Rochester seems to assert from the outset his unwavering conviction that "After Death nothing is, and nothing Death."

If the compression suggests Rochester's certainty, he deepens his personal stamp on the poem with several slight variations on the original. The fire image that Seneca uses to suggest transience Rochester applies to the ostensible Hell. Thus the punitive afterlife is associated both with fire--as is conventional--and with transience or impermanence. The Earl further expresses his skepticism at there being an eternal Hell when he replaces Seneca's reference to the fearsome Cerberus with a bathetic domestic reference to the "grim griesly Dog that keeps the Door." The allusion to Cerberus may suggest Seneca believes in him; Rochester's skepticism is unequivocal.

Rochester's treatments of Ovid's ninth elegy and of Anacreon's fourth



ode are more clearly imitations than translations. There may be little updating of allusion, but both poems are made distinctively Restoration in their tone. In Rochester's "O Love! how cold and slow to take my part," Ovid's passage about the retired laborer is given the special flavor of Restoration ribaldry:

But the old Souldier has his resting place;  
 And the good batter'd Horse is turn'd to Grass:  
 The harrast Whore, who liv'd a Wretch to please;  
 Has leave to be a Bawd, and take her ease.  
 For me then, who have truly spent my blood  
 (Love) in thy Service; and so boldly stood  
 In Celia's Trenches; were't not wisely done,  
 E'en to retire, and live in peace at home?<sup>4</sup>  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 47)

"Celia's Trenches" is an image characteristically Rochester's. Of course, it finds support in "so boldly stood." In sound and in sense "Celia" and "trenches" play off against each other. "Celia" sets up a suggestion of pastoral innocence and delicacy, of beauty and grace; "trenches" interrupts with its realistic suggestions of hungry depth, ugliness, messiness, and even soggiess. Rochester has a knack for such apt epithets, particularly where the relations between the sexes are concerned, where his point is the disjunction between actuality and dream, between reality and the promise of paradise.

The entire poem has Rochester's clarity and vigor. For example, Rochester clarifies the allusion to Achilles and Telephus:

Achilles Sword would certainly bestow  
 A Cure, as certain as it gave the Blow.  
 (Ibid.)

The strength and harshness of Rochester's diction cohere with the heroic, military pose of the speaker:

We thine own Slaves feel thy Tyrannick blows,  
 Whilst thy tame hand's unmov'd against thy Foes.  
 (Ibid.)





What Wretch can bear a live-long night's dull rest,  
Or think himself in lazy slumbers blest?  
(Ibid., p. 48)

The excellence of the Earl's treatment is all the more clearly seen when compared with the Cambridge translation done by Christopher Marlowe.<sup>5</sup>

The central theme in Rochester's poem is the analogy between military activity and sexual. The speaker poses as a military hero, but his heroism is based not on military activity but on sexual. And underlying the pretense of heroism recurs an admission of weakness. The speaker is not active but passive, not an archer but the target of arrows:

Strike here, this undefended bosom wound,  
And for so brave a Conquest be renown'd.  
Shafts fly so fast to me from every part,  
You'll scarce discern the Quiver from my heart.  
(Ibid.)

The speaker here is the insatiable lover for whom the quantity has become the important thing in his love experience, not the quality. He is making a concerted attempt at self-delusion:

Me may my soft deluding Dear deceive;  
I'm happy in my hopes while I believe.  
(Ibid.)

By posing as a kind of active hero, he is attempting to veil his enslavement to the senses:

Such sweet, dear, tempting, Devils Women are.  
Whene're those flames grow faint, I quickly find  
A fierce, black, storm, pour down upon my mind:  
Headlong I'm hurl'd, like Horsemen, who, in vain,  
Their (fury-flaming) Coursers would restrain.  
(Ibid.)

The speaker's final wish is to see womankind enslaved as he is. Ironically, his ultimate exhortation is to spread passivity, to perpetuate the sensual torpor.

Rochester's "Vulcan, contrive me such a Cup" is a full-blown imitation of Anacreon's fourth ode.<sup>6</sup> The Earl contemporizes the poem





with a reference to Mastrich, the site of the 1673 siege of the Dutch by Monmouth's army of French and English soldiers. Where Anacreon eschews association with Orion, Rochester alludes to the comic astrologer of Samuel Butler's Hudibras:

Let it no name of Planets tell,  
 Fix'd Stars, or Constellations:  
 For I am no Sir Sindrophel,  
 Nor none of his Relations.  
 (Ibid., p. 29)

As well as expressing the speaker's disbelief in astrology, Rochester's version eschews pedantry and incompetence.

Rochester adds a classical allusion as well as the modern. Anacreon makes no reference to Nestor in his line parallel to Rochester's

Vulcan, contrive me such a Cup  
 As Nestor us'd of old . . . .  
 (Ibid., p. 28)

In this poem as in the translation of Ovid, Rochester sets up a heroic pose, then dispels the illusion of heroism, indeed of respectability. The reference to Nestor helps define the heroic pretense from the beginning. The military tone of the imagery, allusions, and rhythm counterpoints the admission by the singer--in Rochester and Anacreon alike--that "With War I've nought to do." Rochester's speaker fabricates his ethic of pseudo-heroism out of the loose life:

Make it so large, that, fill'd with Sack  
 Up to the swelling Brim,  
 Vast Toasts, on the delicious Lake,  
 Like Ships at Sea, may swim.  
 (Ibid.)

Anacreon provides no parallel to this pseudo-military heroism.

As Rochester's speaker continues, his dignity diminishes. The reference to Nestor is followed by a reference to a contemporary petty skirmish, from which no hero comparable to Nestor could have emerged.



So too Orion dwindles to Sindrophel. And the speaker's pretense to heroism is revealed to be a sham disguise of his homosexuality and drunkenness.

Anacreon's last six lines, as translated by J. M. Edmonds,

But grave me on't the clambering vine  
And the laughing clusters fine,  
And, gathering them, a Maenad crew;  
And make a winepress on it too,  
And three gold figures treading there,  
Love, Bacchus, and my fairest fair;  
(Anacreontea, p. 23)

Rochester expands into two quatrains of loose equivalence:

But carve thereon a spreading Vine;  
Then add two lovely Boys;  
Their Limbs in amorous Folds intwine,  
The Type of future Joys.

Cupid and Bacchus my Saints are;  
May Drink and Love still reign:  
With Wine I wash away my Cares,  
And then to Love again.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 29)

V. de Sola Pinto finds "the 'spreading Vine' an emblem of fertility appropriately linked to the 'two lovely boys'" in the fifth stanza.<sup>7</sup> However, he does not explain how an emblem of fertility is "appropriate" to two boys, however lovely. Were the lovers in the scene of opposite sexes, were there lurking amid the sensuality the possibility--if not the promise--of propagation, of regeneration, then the fertility emblem would have a straightforward appropriateness. But Rochester would perceive the fruitlessness of a homosexual embrace. Indeed he explicitly describes the scene as static:

Their Limbs in amorous Folds intwine,  
The Type of future Joys.

The joys are frozen; they go nowhere. Pinto is also wrong to claim the debauchery graduates into "an aesthetic experience." The movement









. . . and take no pains to make the multitude admire you, content with a few [judicious] readers . . . . It is enough for me, that the knight [Maecenas] applauds . . . . Many others whom, though men of learning and my friends, I purposely omit--to whom I could wish these satires, such as they are, may give satisfaction; and I should be chagrined, if they pleased in a degree below my expectation.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, the target of Horace's satire is Lucilius, who as a poet laureate, satirist, and critic is a perfect parallel to Dryden. Indeed Boileau refers to "Lucilius, inventeur de la satire."<sup>14</sup> Because both Lucilius and Dryden were critics, Rochester can change Horace's

Does not he ridicule many of Ennius' verses  
Which are too light for the gravity of the [subject]?<sup>15</sup>

to

But does not D[r]yden, find ev'n Johnson dull?  
Fletcher and Beaumont, uncorrect, and full,  
O<f>lewd Lines as he calls 'em?  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 97)

Dryden criticised the indecorum of these playwrights in these very terms, so the parallel is valid.<sup>16</sup>

Given such an appropriate model, Rochester can follow the original closely. Mary Lascelles claims the Earl varies widely from the original,<sup>17</sup> but he actually does not. Rochester's variations on Horace are of two kinds. First, he adds subtle strokes to confirm or keep consistent the pivotal substitution of Dryden for Lucilius. Secondly, Rochester expands his survey of his literary contemporaries to include more than are included by Horace. But Rochester remains within the frame of Horace's poem. Like Horace's, Rochester's opening is dramatic, sudden, and suggesting that an earlier statement of literary principles is now to be defended or clarified. Rochester concludes with the same preference for discriminating criticism as Horace does. Horace's last line Rochester omits because Rochester's poem is a single speech, not one





in a series of epistles.

Rochester molds the poem to fit Dryden exactly. In the second line Rochester varies to refer to Dryden's notorious eclecticism:

Well Sir, 'tis granted, I said D[ryden's] Rhimes,  
Were stoln, unequal, nay, dull many times . . . .  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 95)

Horace accuses Lucilius of "unequal" rhymes and of occasional dullness but not of plagiarism:

To be sure I did say, that the verses of  
Lucilius did not run smoothly.<sup>18</sup>

Rochester's accusation was a common one against Dryden.<sup>19</sup> The addition is made so unobtrusively that it almost passes unnoticed. And Horace himself seems heard to attack literary borrowing.

Rochester varies on Horace's "It is by no means sufficient to make an auditor grin with laughter"<sup>20</sup>:

'Tis therefore not enough, when your false sense,  
Hits the false Judgment of an Audience:  
Of clapping Fools . . . .  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 95)

By generalising Horace's image of laughter to the broader idea of applause in general, Rochester achieves at least two subtle effects. First, he suggests a noisy audience and the fact that it is expressing a collective, not a personal opinion. Secondly, Rochester takes into account the fact that Dryden wrote tragedies as well as comedies.

Occasionally the Earl makes a particular application of a general attitude he finds in Horace. Where Horace has "Pollio sings the actions of kings in iambic measure,"<sup>21</sup> Rochester focuses his approval on stately grace, on the suiting of measure to elevated content:

Waller, by Nature, for the Bays design'd, )  
With force, and fire, and fancy unconfin'd )  
In Panegyricks, does excell Mankind. )  
He best can turn, enforce, and soften things,  
To praise great Conquerors, or to flatter Kings.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 97)



Rochester's claim that Dryden, "when he wou'd be sharp . . . still was blunt" parallels Horace's comment that Lucilius

flowed muddily, frequently bearing along more things which  
ought to be taken away than left.<sup>22</sup>

Rochester and Horace here both disapprove of inadequate editing. But Rochester's version exemplifies what it approves. This is one point where reading the model and the imitation together suggests an ironic interplay between them.<sup>23</sup> Rochester's omission of the metaphor is an implicit comment on its redundancy.

All in all, the Earl makes fair literary judgments in the Allusion. Where Horace claims "that smooth-faced Hermogenes never read" Old Comedy,<sup>24</sup> Rochester says

refin'd E Etherege, copy's not at all,  
But is himself, a sheer Original.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 96)

The "smooth-faced" Hermogenes is a predictable parallel for "Gentle George." One could contend Etherege must have been well-read in the equivalent of the Old Comedians, Jonson and Shakespeare. But the lines have an ironic double edge. If Etherege is well-read, then Rochester is poking light fun at his possible claim to total originality, as well as at the long incubation period that preceded each new Etherege work. Neither Etherege nor any other Restoration writer was anything near a "sheer Original," unless by sheerness is meant transparency.<sup>25</sup> But if Etherege is not well-read, as the DNB report of his "short time at Cambridge" seems to suggest,<sup>26</sup> Rochester tickles him with the claim that he has not copied because he has not read, or even perhaps, what he has not read. In any event, the satire which the model here suggests in the imitation is of the greatest gentleness and delicacy, not at





all as harsh as Dingboy's left-handed compliment in Rochester's "Timon":

Damn me (says Dingboy) in my mind Gods-swounds  
E[therege] writes Airy Songs, and soft Lampoons,  
 The best of any Man; as for your Nouns,  
Grammar, and Rules of Art, he knows 'em not,  
 Yet writ two talking Plays without one Plot.  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 102)

In particular Rochester is fair to Dryden. He credits Dryden with "Learning" as well as wit, where Horace had credited Lucilius only with humor. Furthermore, when Rochester wrote the poem, in late 1675 or early 1676, only Astraea Redux, Annus Mirabilis, and The Conquest of Granada of Dryden's major poetry had been written.

Rochester, then, belongs to the mainstream of English imitation. Oldham, whom Johnson names with Rochester as one of the innovators of the form, was "discovered" by Rochester.<sup>27</sup> Moreover Oldham was more of an Englisher than an imitator, more an updater of names. It is with Rochester that the translation becomes both a modern and a personal statement, often exploiting the fact of translation for subtle effect.

The main concern of the Elizabethan translator was to enrich his own literature with a work from another language. Ben Jonson may include Imitation among the four desiderata of the poet, but his stress is placed upon "exactness of Studie," upon transliteration not personal paraphrase.<sup>28</sup> Cowley and Denham tend toward the literal translation, not the free. But Rochester completely reapplies the classical poem to modern times, up-dating the attitude and the idiom, moreover making the poem a personal statement. Rochester made no extant contribution to the theory of imitation. But his work is the first realization of the others' theory.<sup>29</sup> Rochester's imitation is the first of that kind mastered by Alexander Pope,<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Swift, Dr. Johnson,<sup>31</sup> and such modern imitators as Robert Lowell and Ezra Pound.<sup>32</sup>





### CHAPTER III

#### ROCHESTER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

In addition to imitations of classical writers, Rochester also left several revisions of poems by his contemporaries. Again the Earl's revisions are characterised by a close working in detail, by fine discriminations, and by the great freedom that the Earl took in revising others' work. Indeed the freer the treatment and the more personal the statement, the more reluctant one must be to remove a poem of doubtful authorship from the Rochester canon.<sup>1</sup>

The quality of Rochester's changes, where even the slightest alteration may be significant, is suggested by his best-known recasting of contemporary poems, his adaptations of Boileau's third and eighth satires, respectively, "Timon" (Pinto, Poems, pp. 99-104) and "A Satire Against Mankind" (Ibid., pp. 118-124).

"Timon" and Boileau's third satire both describe an aristocratic poet's ordeal of supping with a boor, moreover a bore who has both culinary and literary pretensions. David Vieth has adequately summarised Rochester's improvement upon Boileau:

In place of Boileau's elaborate descriptions, for example, 'Timon' artfully utilizes a few suggestive details. In other respects, too--reflected in the fact that it is sixty-one lines shorter than Boileau's version--'Timon' exhibits the precise, economical technique which characterises Rochester's work.<sup>2</sup>

Both poems begin with the hero appearing fatigued. But Boileau's thirteen-line introduction Rochester compresses to four:



Quel sujet inconnu vous trouble et vous altère?  
 D'où vous vient aujourd'hui cet air sombre et sévère,  
 Et ce visage enfin plus pâle qu'un rentier  
 A l'aspect d'un arrêt qui retranche un quartier?  
 Qu'est devenu ce teint dont la couleur fleurie  
 Sembloit d'ortolans seuls et de bisques nourrie,  
 Où la joie en son lustre attiroit les regards,  
 Et le vin en rubis brilloit de toutes parts?  
 Qui vous a pu plonger dans cette humeur chagrine?  
 A-t-on par quelque édit réformé la cuisine?  
 Ou quelque longue pluie, inondant vos vallons,  
 A-t-elle fait couler vos vins et vos melons?  
 Répondez donc enfin, ou bien je me retire.

(I, pp. 76-77)<sup>3</sup>

What Timon does old Age begin t'approach  
 That thus thou droop'st under a nights debauch?  
 Hast thou lost deep to needy Rogues on Tick  
 Who ne're cou'd pay, and must be paid next Week?  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 99)

In its speed, its colloquialism, and its conversational flair, Rochester's opening has the distinct tone of the Restoration rake. Moreover his reference to the penniless but insistent creditor begins the theme of aggressive self-unawareness that runs through the poem.

Rochester's Timon gets to the point more quickly than Boileau's:

--Ah! de grâce, un moment souffrez que je respire.  
 Je sors de chez un fat, qui, pour m'empoisonner,  
 Je pense, exprès chez lui m'a forcé de dîner.  
 Je l'avois bien prévu. Depuis près d'une année,  
 J'éluois tous les jours sa poursuite obstinée.  
 Mais hier il m'aborde, et me serrant la main . . . .  
 (op. cit.)

Neither alas, but a dull dining Sot,  
 Seiz'd me i'th' Mall, who just my name has got;  
 He runs upon me, cries dear Rogue I'm thine,  
 With me some Wits, of thy acquaintance dine.  
 (op. cit.)

Where Boileau's Timon is invited to visit the following morning,  
 Rochester's is literally shanghaied, for further comic effect:

I tell him I'm engag'd but as a Whore,  
 With modesty enslaves her Spark, the more,  
 The longer I deny'd, the more he prest,  
 At last I e'ne consent to be his Guest.  
 He takes me in his Coach, and as we go;  
Pulls out a Libel, of a Sheet, or two . . . .  
 (Ibid.)



Rochester's racy analogy here derives from the verb séduire in Boileau's "Ce matin donc, séduit par sa vaine promesse." Rochester suggests that to the poetaster the muse serves only to titillate and amuse, whore-like in her function, whore-like in the superficial level of her commitment to the poet.<sup>4</sup>

Much of Rochester's poem is a literal translation of Boileau. "I saw my error, but 'twas now too late," for example, translates Boileau's, "A ces mots, mais trop tard, reconnoissant ma faute . . . ." Rochester Englishes the guests that the host promises; Lambert and Molière are changed to Sedley, Buckhurst and Saville. The actual guests at Rochester's dinner--Halfwit, Huffle, Kickum, and Dingboy--are more vivid equivalents to Boileau's pretentious rustics:

Deux nobles campagnards, grands lecteurs de romans,  
Qui m'ont dit tout Cyrus dans leurs longs compliments.  
(op. cit.)

Rochester, however, personalises the poem by adding the discussion of the libel between Timon and his host. Here the ambiguous placing of the appositive suggests both Timon's impatience with the poetaster and the speaker's own poetic wit:

I vow'd I was no more a Wit, than he,  
Unpractic'd, and unblest in Poetry:  
. . . Of a well-meaning Fool, I'm most afraid,  
Who sillily repeats, what was well said.  
(op. cit.)

Of course, Truewit's disdain for Wouldbewit is a recurring theme in Restoration letters.

All the characters at Rochester's supper--except, of course, the poet's surrogate, the beleaguered Timon--pretend to a grace and a dignity that they do not possess. This pathetic self-unawareness is accompanied by heroic pretense, as in Rochester's most important addition





to Boileau's dinner, the host's wife:

Boy(says my Sot) is my Wife ready yet!  
 A Wife! good Gods! a Fop and Bullys too!  
 For one poor Meale what must I undergo?  
 In comes my Lady strait, and she had been Fair.  
 Fit to give love, and <to> prevent despair;  
 But Age, Beauties incureable Disease,  
 Had left her more desire than pow'r to please:  
 As Cocks will strike, altho' their Spurrs be gone,  
 She with her old bleer Eyes to smite begun:  
 Though nothing else, she (in despite of time)  
 Preserv'd the affectation of her prime;  
 How ever you begun, she brought in love,  
 And hardly from that Subject wou'd remove.  
 (Ibid., p. 100)

The sketch of the wife continues the theme of physical decay that appeared in Rochester's opening lines, the description of Timon. There are two weaknesses of the flesh, Rochester suggests here: the inevitability of aging and the inability of the flesh to satisfy the appetite. Rochester's improvement upon Boileau, then, lies in the thematic unity of Rochester's poem, as well as in the fine details and the compression.

The exact nature of Rochester's debt to Boileau's eighth satire for "A Satire Against Mankind" has been long and carefully disputed.<sup>5</sup> The most accurate statement was made by Thomas Rymer in his edition of Rochester's poems as early as 1691: "The Satyr upon Man is commonly taken to be a translation from Boileau . . . but my Lord Rochester gives us another Cast of Thought, another Turn of Expression . . . . Wheresoever he Imitated or Translated, was loss to him."<sup>6</sup> Rochester's new "Cast of Thought" we will consider in Chapter V; here we will briefly consider Rochester's technical variations on Boileau.

Rochester's "Satire" does not have the striking verbal echoes of Boileau's eighth satire that "Timon" has of the third. What Rochester mainly takes from Boileau's eighth satire is the situation;



the poet is interviewed by a doctor. Significantly, Rochester's interlocutor speaks only once. But in this one, long, confident speech, Rochester's interlocutor makes all the points that Boileau's doctor makes in his series of speeches. The effect is similar to that in Rochester's handling of the speech from Seneca's Troas: the poet's certainty. His interlocutor seems cut off from Rochester's argument altogether, reciting almost mechanically his own attitude, evidently heedless of Rochester's words and reason.<sup>7</sup> Boileau provides a dialectical movement. Rochester's doctor says his piece and then falls silent, presumably overcome completely by the Earl's flowing, incontrovertible argument. Boileau's may have the formal grace and technical balance, but the Earl's polemic is the more powerful, the more self-assured, and the more convincing.<sup>8</sup>

The order in which man is attacked is roughly parallel in the two poems. Boileau and Rochester both begin with the attack on the rationalist's pride and egocentricity, then declare the animal world free of man's pointless, irrational vices and his lusts for wealth and power. Both poets then criticise man's malicious misapplication of his rational powers. Where Boileau concludes by postulating an ass capable of judging mankind, Rochester concludes by skeptically postulating.

a meek humble Man, of modest sense,  
Who Preaching peace, does practice continence.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 124)

The conclusions are similar, however, although Rochester's ending develops out of his earlier reference to Diogenes, known for his love of the bath-tub and for his quest for an honest man (ll.90-91). Boileau's ass concludes that man is as bestial as the animals are; Rochester that even if a man free of all the given vices were to be



found, even

If such there are, yet grant me this at least,  
Man differs more from Man, than Man from Beast.  
 (Ibid., p. 124)

Even in this compliment, then, there are suggestions of the factionalism Rochester attacked in man earlier.

The factionalism in man, man's political hungers, is the theme of another interesting revision attributed to Rochester by Mr. Harold Brooks. This is "The Commons' Petition," which Mr. Brooks points out is an adaptation of the fifth stanza of a poem written about 1642, "A Madrigall on Justice, alluding to the Parliament." As the poems are short I shall quote both in full, the original followed by the version assigned to Rochester:

In all humilitie they crave  
 Their Sovereign, to be their Slave;  
 Desiring him that he would be  
 Betray'd to them most loyally;  
 For it were Meeknesse sure in him  
 To be a Vice-Roy unto Pym;  
 And if he would a while lay down  
 His Scepter, Majestie, and Crown,  
 He should be made for time to come  
 The greatest Prince in Christendom.  
 Charles at this time not having need,  
 Thank'd them as much as if he did.

In all Humanity we crave  
 Our Sovereign may be our Slave;  
 And humbly beg, that he may be  
 Betray'd by us most Loyally.  
 And if he please once to lay down  
 His Scepter, Dignity and Crown,  
 We'll make him, for the Time to come,  
 The greatest Prince in Christendom.

The Kings Answer.

Charles at this Time having no need  
 Thanks you as much as if he did.

The fact of translation<sup>10</sup> is of first significance here, the irony of applying to Charles II a poem originally critical of Charles I. The implicit reference to Charles I serves as an additional warning to Charles II,







a reminder of the fickleness of the court and the population. Rochester's irony runs deeper than just the reapplication of the criticism, the change in setting, however. Subtle changes in wording suggest the self-unawareness of the speaker, the unwitting self-discovery of the persona.

Rochester changes the original narrative to a dialogue. In his stress of the second speaker's voice at the end, Rochester may be following more closely the manuscript from which the printed version of the original poem was taken. But this need not be true. The effect of the second voice in Rochester is to place the first speech in a dramatic situation, to give the first speaker a listener, an excuse for his pretense. As well, the effect of Rochester's version is to align the poet with the king against the parliament's infringement upon traditional regal power. Finally, by delivering the answer in the third person, by a messenger and not by the king himself, Rochester suggests the king's aloofness from the anti-royalist forces that the first speaker represents.

Slight changes in the wording confirm that Rochester's sympathies lie with the king and against the self-seeking parliamentarians. But the poem warns Charles to keep up his dignity as well as keeping down the encroachments upon his powers. Rochester changes "humilitie" to "Humanity" in the first line with two effects. "Humilitie" would be redundant because its idea is suggested by "humbly" in line three, as well as by the speaker's general tone of supplication. Secondly, "humanity" generalises the position that the first speaker takes, so that political greed is made to seem a universal trait of human nature.<sup>11</sup> Then too, Rochester's "for the Time to come" sounds more like "for the time being" than the original does; "for time to come" suggests "for all



time." Rochester implies that Charles would win but a temporary reward, a short popularity, by abdicating to the parliament his responsibility for control, as distinct from the eternal fame that is presumably the reward for true kingship.

Most important, however, is the self-defeat of the words of Rochester's first speaker, the self-contradiction or irony in such phrases as "Betray'd by us most loyally." In Rochester's version the actual nature of the speaker's sham humility betrays itself:

we crave  
Our Sovereign may be our Slave;  
And humbly beg . . . .

Rochester's point is more effectively delivered by the persona than by the third-person commentator of the original version. For one thing, the form of Rochester's poem replays the theme of its message: the disparity between pretense and actual motive. There is an additional ambiguity in the speaker's claim to speak "in all Humanity." Rochester may merely intend to suggest the universal greed in man. Probably Rochester intends the speaker to be falsely denying personal interest, to profess to be complaining on behalf of mankind.

Rochester's poem is a double-edged warning to Charles. On the one hand Rochester warns Charles of the danger in acceding to the parliament's requests, warns Charles not to be inveigled by the speaker's pretense to personal disinterest, to an objective concern for humanity, nor by the promise of immediate popularity. Moreover, by changing "Majestie" to "Dignitie," Rochester suggests that there is more to kingship than just the office. To remain a king, Rochester reminds Charles, one must act with a kingly decorum. In the phrase, "once lay down," Rochester warns Charles that kingship is a constant responsibility



and that the king must never drop his decorum or his guard.

But Rochester could preach libertinism as readily and as convincingly as he could continence. This seems to be the case in "The Heavens carouse each Day a Cup" (Hayward, pp. 109-110). But to read the poem as simply libertine is to ignore the firm vein of irony in it. The poem has been declared "so obviously derivative from one of the 'Anacreontea' that it could be called a translation . . . . Cowley also has a version of the poem."<sup>13</sup> More probably Rochester based his poem on Cowley's, "Drinking,"<sup>14</sup> than on the original by Anacreon.

Cowley bases a twenty-one line poem upon the following ode in the Anacreontea:

Earth drinks the brook, and tree  
     The earth; and even so  
 The sea the river, sun the sea,  
 And moon the sun. Then why make ye,  
     My comrades, this ado,  
     If I'd be drinking too?<sup>15</sup>

Rochester improves upon Cowley's wit and upon his use of language.

Where Cowley opens his poem with

The thirsty Earth soaks up the Rain,  
 And drinks, and gapes for drink again . . . ,

Rochester packs a new twist into the second line and makes the personification clear as early as the third word:

The Heavens carouse each Day a Cup,  
 No wonder Atlas holds her Up.

Rochester depicts a world not just thirsty but in drunken revelry, a world, moreover, in which no degree of excess satisfies.

Rochester's images are more dynamic, more suggestive than Cowley's:

The Plants suck in the Earth, and are  
 With constant drinking fresh and Fair.  
     (Cowley)





The Trees suck up the Earth and Ground,  
And in their Brown Bowls drink around.  
(Rochester)

The Sea it self, which one would think  
Should have but little need of Drink,  
Drinks ten thousand Rivers up,  
So fill'd that they o'erflow the Cup.  
(Cowley)

The Sea too, whom the Salt makes dry,  
His greedy Thirst to satisfy,  
Ten thousand Rivers drinks, and then  
Grows drunk, and spews them up again.  
(Rochester)

In Rochester's version we have such an analogy explored, as wittily drawn out, as would have done Donne justice.

The last quotation in particular suggests a Metaphysical's complexity. There is an ironic ambiguity in "dry," suggesting the disparity between objective and subjective satiety. The sea may no longer be "dry" in the sense of its being moist, but it still can be "dry" if it has the psychological problem of thirst. It may be the salt that makes the sea "dry," but the salt is a vital, indeed definitive, element of the sea, part of the sea's fundamental character. In other words, thirst or hunger, the demand of the appetites, is not cyclical or temporary, Rochester suggests here, but a central element of the human condition. The personification of the sun and sea universalises man's problem of appetite. Even the phenomenon of an eclipse is described in human terms, in terms of cannibalism and incest:

The Moon quaffs up the Sun, her Brother,  
And wishes she could tope another.

Appetite drives the moon--as man--to perversion, to indiscriminate attempts at self-satisfaction.<sup>16</sup>

Equally significant is Rochester's condensation of Cowley's



description of the drunken orgy of the sun and the moon:

They drink and dance by their own light,  
 They drink and revel all the night.  
 Nothing in Nature's Sober found,  
 But an eternal Health goes round.  
 Fill up the Bowl then, fill it high,  
 Fill all the Glasses there, for why  
 Should every creature drink but I,  
 Why, Man of Morals, tell me why?

Rochester removes the gaiety and cheer from Cowley's orgy scene and leaves only fuddle. Fittingly, the fuddle pervades the syntax of the first two lines of Rochester's conclusion:

Ev'ry Thing fuddles; then that I  
 Is't any Reason should be dry?  
 Well, I will be content to thirst,  
 But too much Drink shall make me first.

Here the fuddle in the first line undercuts the reference to reason in the second. The parenthetical positioning of "Is't any Reason" suggests that the justification of the revelry, the rationalisation, is an afterthought, not a motive. The speaker drinks on, recognizing the inescapability and the insatiety of his thirst, but compelled futilely to try to stave off the impossible demands by his appetite.

Rochester takes less freedom with his "Why dost thou shade thy lovely face?" (Pinto, Poems, pp. 132-133), largely a variation on Quarles's Emblem VII, Book III, but with the final stanza transposed from Quarles's Emblem XII.<sup>17</sup>

The mixing of stanzas from two poems suggests that Rochester--assuming that Rochester is the author--<sup>18</sup> is playing a variation not upon a poem but upon a poet or upon a general attitude, in this case the religious, with which the poet is usually associated. The Oxford Book of English Verse claims Rochester's poem was "Pilfered from Francis Quarles, and improved."<sup>19</sup> Neither pilfering nor improvement is a valid claim, however,



for Rochester writes a different poem altogether.

Of course, his love poem uses the existence of Quarles's religious version to achieve its full effect. Again the fact of translation is significant. We must assume that Rochester intended his poem to be read in the light of Quarles's. The aristocratic Rochester did not need to plagiarize. Moreover, Quarles was so well-known, probably such an important element of each Wit's education, that Rochester could not have reasonably expected the parallel to Quarles to escape unnoticed, even if the poem were to be circulated only in manuscript, "a private experiment on a piece of contemporary verse."<sup>20</sup> Rochester intends the reader to read the love poem in the context of the religious. As in Donne's use of religious imagery in poems of secular love, Rochester's purpose is the thrill of near-blasphemy, on the one hand, and on the other, extravagance in the expression of the love.

Where a lesser poet might have been content to change "Lord" in Quarles's poem to "Love," Rochester makes very fine changes in wording, so that his poem is as consistent and as exalting an address to his mistress as Quarles's is to the Lord. Rochester adds "of thine" in line two to stress the idea of human possession. Quarles's reference to the soul in line three Rochester omits, because in the love-religion in which Rochester is writing his hymn, there is only the heart and the body, no soul.

By transposing the semi-colon in line five, Rochester stresses the need that he claims he has for the woman:

Thou art my life, my way, my light; in thee  
I live, I move, and by thy beams I see . . . .  
(Quarles)





Thou art my Life, my way my Light's in Thee,  
 I Live, I move and by thy beams I see.  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 132)

Rochester also avoids the indelicacy that would result from reading "I live, I move" with "in Thee." Similarly Rochester omits the following stanza from Quarles, because of its realism as well as because of its reference to mysterious revivification:

O, I am dead: To whom shall I, poore I  
 Repaire? To whom shall my sad Ashes fly  
 But Life? And where is Life but in thine eye?

Rochester moves Quarles's fourteenth stanza ahead to become the ninth. The stanza beginning "If I have lost my Path" then precedes the one beginning "My Path is lost." The stanzas are six stanzas apart in Quarles, the assertive ("My Path is lost . . .") preceding the conditional statement that governs it ("If I have lost my Path . . ."). Finally, Quarles's "I cannot safely go, nor safely stay," Rochester alters to "I cannot go nor safely stay." To the lover, the consideration of safety in leaving one's love is negligible, indeed unflattering; what is important is the leaving itself, the fact of departure.

In these close alterations, Rochester shows himself again the sensitive, painstaking poet. His revision of Quarles, or rather his reapplication of Quarles, is a delicate, lyrical expression of an essentially blasphemous pose. In applying a religious poem to his mistress, Rochester promised a kind of blasphemy. The blasphemy was not forthcoming. But the tension was, the expectation of the blasphemy. And the poem is all the more effective as a result. The possibility of blasphemy shadows the idyllic mood of the poem throughout.

The recasting of Quarles's poem is actually a parody, parody perhaps definable as subversive imitation. The ironic element



in the parodist's impulse is suggested by the Greek word from which "parody" derives: "a song sung beside."<sup>21</sup> What we have called the fact of translation is really the Greek concept of parody.

Rochester's "Mock Song" is a parody of Sir Carr Scroope's "I cannot change as others do" (Pinto, Poems, p. 34).<sup>22</sup> Both poems are spoken by scorned lovers, but Rochester omits the euphemism in Scroope's poem, the pretense to unreal, lofty sentiments. Scroope's basic plea of constancy Rochester reduces to

My tender Heart, sincere, and true.  
Deserves not to be scorn'd.  
(Thorpe, p. 75)

Rochester's lover makes the more practical case: he pleads sexual potency to be his redeeming virtue. Scroope's "Will still love on, will still love on, and dye" Rochester restates with a cynical pretense of equivalence:

Can I (said she) with Nature strive,  
Alas I am, alas I am a Whore.  
(Ibid.)

There is a similar pathos in Rochester's speaker's continuing loyalty to a woman who will "swive, with Forty Lovers more" (Ibid.).

There can be no doubt that Rochester is parodying Scroope here. Scroope's first line, "I Cannot change as others do," is paralleled by Rochester's first line, "I Swive as well as others do." Both poems include a rhyme on "scorn" in the first four lines. Both introduce Phillis in line five. But where Scroope's Phillis has a difficultly moved heart, Rochester's swives promiscuously. The second stanzas in both poems are extravagant expressions of pain. The last line completes the parallel: Scroope's "Can never break, can never break in Vain" Rochester parallels with "To wish those Eyes, to wish those Eyes fuckt out." The sentiments may be inverted in Rochester's version, the tone a



world apart from Scroope's, yet the poems are structurally and thematically related. The wistful futility in the conclusion of Scroope's poem takes firmer, realistic, biting shape in Rochester's closing, with its suggestion of an insatiable sexual appetite and total abandonment to lust.

There is no doubt that Rochester wrote the two poems based on Boileau, and there is hardly any doubt of Rochester's authorship of the "Mock Song," "I Swive as well as others do." But we may never know for certain if Rochester was responsible for "The Commons' Petition," the recasting of the Cowley ode, and the parody of Quarles.

Of the three poems of uncertain authorship, the first two recall the egocentricity and self-glorification in this passage from the "Heroical Epistle," Rochester's Bajazet bragging:

You fondly look for what none e're cou'd find,  
 Deceive your self, and then call me unkind,  
 And by false Reasons, wou'd my falshood prove,  
 For 'tis as natural to change, as love:  
 You may as justly at the Sun, repine,  
 Because alike it does not always shine:  
 No glorious thing, was ever made to stay,  
 My blazing Star, but visits and away.  
 As fatal to it shines, as those 'ith' Skyes,  
 'Tis never seen, but some great Lady dyes.  
 The boasted favor, you so precious hold,  
 To me's no more than changing of my Gold  
 What e're you gave, I paid you back in Bliss,  
 Then where's the Obligation pray of this?  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 43)

The theme of the self-seeker, the selfish aspirant to autocracy, the Bajazet poem shares with "The Commons' Petition." With the Cowley poem the passage shares the libertine's attempt to excuse himself by inflating his venality or vice to universal proportions.<sup>23</sup> The Bajazet passage also has the complexity, the intricacy, that these poems of doubtful authorship have. In "The Commons' Petition" and the revision





of Quarles the subtlety of the changes bespeaks Rochester; the ambiguity of the speaker's relationship to the king in the former poem, and the ironic self-discovery in the Cowley revision, confirm the Rochester touch.



## CHAPTER IV

### VALENTINIAN

At some time during the years 1610-1614 John Fletcher dramatised the story of the Roman Emperor Valentinian's rape of Lucina, the wife of the Roman general Maximus. The play was first published in the Beaumont and Fletcher folio of 1647.<sup>1</sup> It then sank into a somewhat deserved neglect until the Earl of Rochester, late in his life, turned to rewrite it.<sup>2</sup> Rochester's version of Fletcher's Valentinian was probably first produced in 1677-78.<sup>3</sup>

Fletcher's play opens upon the king's panders bemoaning their failure to procure for the king the chaste and beautiful Lucina. Lucina then rebuffs the attempt by the panders' wives. In a game of dice, Valentinian wins from Maximus temporary possession of a ring that Lucina had given her husband as a love token. Dispatching Maximus on military business, Valentinian uses the ring to lure Lucina to his court, in the belief that she is to bid Maximus farewell. There the king engages Lucina in a short debate; he promises that he will not force her honor; then he leads her off-stage where he rapes her. Behind the main plot, Valentinian's designs on Lucina, there are two sub-themes. Maximus and his best friend, the honorable Aecius, confess their displeasure with the emperor's indolence. Secondly, Aecius dismisses the loyal officer Pontius from his service for openly criticising the king.

At the beginning of Act III, Valentinian leads Lucina onstage, instructing her to keep secret her rape. Maximus and Aecius enter,



immediately sense what has befallen her, and agree that her honor demands she kill herself. She does. Maximus resolves to arrange Aecius' death because

He bears his high Command 'twixt me and vengeance,  
And in mine own road sinks me, he is honest,  
Of a most constant loyalty to Caesar.  
(Fletcher, III, iii)<sup>4</sup>

His suspicions aroused by a letter that Maximus has planted, Valentinian commissions Pontius to kill Aecius.

As Act IV opens, Valentinian rails at his panders for not preventing Lucina's suicide. To regain the emperor's favor, the panders attempt to kill Aecius but lose heart and flee. Pontius then enters but, unable to bring himself to kill his beloved general, chooses to kill himself instead. Aecius by now suspects he has lost Valentinian's favor so he too kills himself. His servants, Phidias and Aretus, administer a slow, agonizing, and fatal poison to Valentinian. Then they kill themselves, allowing themselves time to gloat over the emperor's fate.

Act V discovers the soldiers rebelling upon the news of Aecius' death. Maximus enters pleased:

Gods, what a sluice of blood have I let open!  
My happy ends are come to birth, he's dead,  
And I reveng'd . . . .  
(Fletcher, V, iii)

Valentinian's widow, Eudoxia, agrees to marry Maximus, whom the citizens now proclaim their Caesar. Eudoxia poisons Maximus, and he dies at his coronation. Eudoxia thereupon reveals Maximus' plot against Aecius, and the citizens applaud her murdering him.

As the summary may suggest, Fletcher's play has a number of flaws. The fourth and fifth acts divert the attention from Valentinian's





rape of Lucina and the issues of regal responsibility that it involves. By the play's end, Valentinian has virtually been forgotten. Furthermore, the characters are often unbelievably motivated. The action also pauses occasionally for unrelated and insignificant incidents, such as the two scenes inserted between Valentinian's death and Maximus' coronation, which feature conversation between average citizens. Rochester focuses the play on Valentinian, Lucina, Maximus, and Aecius, omitting Eudoxia and the citizens Afranius, Paulus, and Licippus.

Rochester opens with the colorful but wordless sweep across the stage of Valentinian and his court. In the first scene, where Aecius and Maximus discuss the king, it is significantly Aecius who expresses the first discontent:

I rather wish he would Exchange his Passions,  
Give you his Thirst of Love for yours of Honour.  
(Hayward, p. 165)

As Sprague notes, Rochester's Aecius is exactly like Fletcher's except that Rochester's "preaches divine right in even stronger terms."<sup>5</sup> Although Rochester makes Maximus seem more sympathetic than Fletcher's, the Earl stresses the conflict between Lucina and Valentinian. He further avoids Fletcher's anticlimax by ending the play with Valentinian's death. To unify the structure Rochester omits the scene between Pontius and Aecius' servants, Phidias and Aretus.

Fletcher's Maximus is an exceedingly indistinct figure.<sup>6</sup> The responsibility for Aecius' death Rochester transfers from Maximus to a soldier, Proculus. Rochester also minimises Maximus' instruction to Lucina to kill herself after the rape. By omitting Maximus' interest in Eudoxia, Rochester further simplifies his character. Because Maximus still retains some of his personal political aspirations, Rochester does not leave him in full command of our sympathies.



The Earl of Rochester's lurid fame, rather than the play itself, seems to have prompted Allardyce Nicoll to condemn Rochester for introducing "indescribable indelicacies"<sup>7</sup> into his revision. Actually--as a close comparison between Fletcher's play and Rochester's bears out--Rochester seems studiously to have avoided indelicacy.<sup>8</sup> Admittedly Rochester imputes Uranian inclinations to his Valentinian. But the play pivots upon the monarch's sensual, indolent nature, upon his abandonment to sensuality. Furthermore, Rochester's reference to homosexuality confirms the critical identification he seems to make between Valentinian and Charles II. Uranianism would help modernize the play for a Restoration audience, who would have come to expect ambidexterity of a dissolute monarch.<sup>9</sup>

John Harold Wilson overstates his case when he declares the hint of Valentinian's homosexuality to be "quite in keeping with Rochester's delight in foul invective."<sup>10</sup> The passage in Rochester's play is remarkably subdued, remarkably free of the foul invective which characterised Restoration libel--not just the Earl's. Rochester couches the homosexuality in Platonic generalities. For example, in Chylax's eulogy of the eunuch Lycias there is no definite suggestion of sexual impropriety until the last line:

'Tis a soft Rogue, this Lycias  
 And rightly understood,  
 Hee's worth a thousand Womens Nicenesses!  
 The Love of Women moves ever with their Lust,  
 Who therefore still are fond, but seldom just:  
 Their Love is Usury, while they pretend,  
 To gain the Pleasure double which they lend.  
 But a dear Boy's disinterested Flame  
 Gives Pleasure, and for meer Love gathers pain;  
 In him alone Fondness sincere does prove,  
 And the kind tender Naked Boy is Love.

(Hayward, pp. 181-182)

Even the, "the kind tender Naked Boy" primarily refers to Cupid.









Oh Emperor, thou Picture of a Glory!  
 Thou mangled Figure of a ruin'd Greatness!  
 Speak, saist thou? Speak the Wrongs of Maximus?  
 Yes, I will speak. Imperial Murderer!  
 Ravisher! Oh thou royal Villany!  
 In Furple dipt to give a Gloss to Mischief.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Hold me you Gods; and judge our Passions rightly,  
 Lest I should kill him: kill this luxurious Worm,  
 Ere yet a thought of Danger has awak'd him,  
 End him even in the midst of night-Debauchees,  
 Mounted upon a Tripes, drinking Healths  
 With shallow Rascals, Pimps, Buffoons and Bawds,  
 Who with vile Laughter take him in their Arms,  
 And bear the drunken Caesar to his Bed,  
 Where to the scandal of all Majesty,  
 At every gasp he belches Provinces,  
 Kisses off Fame, and at the Empires ruine,  
 Enjoys his costly Whore.

(Hayward, p. 235)

Beside the libels of the day, this is mild stuff. Maximus continues:

By the immortal Gods I will awake thee;  
 I'll rouse thee Caesar, if strong Reason can,  
 If thou hadst ever sense of Roman Honour,  
 Or th'Imperial Genius ever warm'd thee.  
 Why hast thou us'd me thus?

\* \* \* \* \*  
 If there be no such thing as Right or Wrong,  
 But Force alone must swallow all possession,  
 Then to what purpose in so long descents  
 Were Roman Laws observ'd or Heav'n obey'd?  
 If still the Great for Ease or Vice were form'd,  
 Why did our first Kings toy? Why was the Plow  
 Advanc'd to be the Pillar of the State?  
 Why was the lustful Tarquin with his House  
 Expell'd, but for the Rape of bleeding Lucrece?  
 . . . But I will tell thee Tyrant,  
 To make thee hate thy Guilt, and curse thy Fears,  
 . . . barb'rous Caesar . . .

(Hayward, p. 236)

Even when Valentinian exhorts his panders to activity, his words are neither graphic nor pornographic:

Go, call your Wives to Councill, and prepare  
 To tempt, dissemble, promise, fawn and swear,  
 To make faith look like Folly use your skill,  
 . . . Honour a Notion! Piety a Cheat!

(Hayward, p. 172)

Beside Fletcher's text, Rochester's reads surprisingly like a



Bowdlerisation, particularly--and this is significant--in the manuscript version of Rochester's play. Occasionally the Earl's cleanness costs the play some of the dramatic power of Fletcher's version. The Earl's scene of the bawds, Marcellina and Claudia (Hayward, pp. 200-201), lacks the bawdry of Fletcher's II, iv. Rochester's Valentinian is more reticent than Fletcher's here, on the sexual stamina of women:

They're stronger than ye think, they'll hold  
the Hammer . . .  
(Fletcher, I, iii)

They're stronger than you think . . . .  
(Hayward, p. 173)

Where Fletcher's Aecius tells Valentinian, "And when ye neither drink nor sleep, ye wench much," Rochester's Aecius complains of Valentinian's unsteady control, his irrationality: "And when you neither drink nor sleep you guess, Sir" (Hayward, p. 174). Rochester's Aecius refers to government decisions, to the king's work, not his play.

Rochester keeps Lucina's speeches particularly decorous. One change, for example, removes all suggestion of heat:

Let women live themselves, if they must fall,  
Their own destruction find 'em, not your Favours . . .  
(Fletcher, I, ii)

Let Women live themselves; if they must fail;  
Their own Destruction find 'em.  
(Hayward, p. 185)

This was Lucina to the bawds. Here is Lucina in her argument with the emperor:

I do not think ye are lascivious,  
These wanton men belye ye, you are Caesar . . .  
(Fletcher, II, iv)

I do not think you are so bad a man;  
I know report belyes you; you are Caesar.  
(Hayward, pp. 204-205)

Rochester's lines here have the additional advantage of taunting



Valentinian with his humanity, with the fact that he is a man, with mortal passions, for all his unusual powers of office. Rochester's Lucina seems more than Fletcher's inclined to generosity in appraising others. She seems virtuous beyond even the use of such words as "lascivious" and "wanton," priggish perhaps, but virtuous.

Significantly too, Lucina is discussed and addressed in more delicate terms in Rochester's play than in Fletcher's--as if her ideal personality inspired virtue and delicacy in others. Where Fletcher's bawd, Ardelia, says of the escaping quarry, Lucina,

But if it be, I'll have the young men gelded;  
Come let's go think, she must not 'scape us thus;  
There is a certain season, if we hit,  
That women may be rid without a bit;  
(Fletcher, I, ii)

Rochester's Ardelia says:

But if it be, I'd have the Young man hang'd  
--Come--let's go think--she must not scape us thus.  
(Hayward, p. 186)

When Claudia reports Lucina's suicide to Maximus, Rochester's Claudia omits the bathetic last three words in Fletcher's: "At which she fell, and stirred no more; we rub'd her" (III, i). In the same speech, where Fletcher's Claudia says "Dare I, said she, defile this house with whore" (III, i), in Rochester Claudia says "Dare I, said she, defile my Husband's House?" (Hayward, p. 216). Rochester's line is in better keeping with Lucina's decorum. Moreover it recalls Lucina's belief that by continuing to live after the rape she would only increase her husband's shame.

Such fine changes in wording suggest that Rochester paid close attention to his work, that the Earl was not the typical scribbler of the aristocratic literati. Sometimes the fine change reveals a delicate nuance in feeling, as in Lucina's last speech quoted above.





Where Fletcher's Maximus refers to Lucina's love-token, the ring, with "This was not made to lose, Sir" (I, iii), Rochester's more clearly expresses the significance of the ring to Maximus: "This was not given to lose" (Hayward, p. 187). What the ring is itself is not so important to Maximus as the fact that his Lucina gave it to him. Rochester also seems to sense Lucina's shame, her physical disgust with herself, when he has her say, after the rape, "As long as there is Life in this Body" (Hayward, p. 207). The break-down in the rhythm suggests her disgust with her body. The extra, soft beat before "Body" suggests her faltering at the word. Fletcher's Lucina says, "As long as there is motion in my body" (III, i), which although not inappropriate lacks Rochester's subtlety. Its rhythm is too smooth and easy for Lucina's state of mind. Rochester's Lucina seems to be trying--subconsciously--to disown her shamed body. Hence, of course, her suicide.

The change of a single word may involve extensive shading of the meaning. Rochester, in Aecius' early interview with Maximus about the emperor's weakness, replaces "boldness" with "Treason," a word with more specific and more immediate political associations:

You search the sore too deep; and I must tell you,  
In any other man this had been boldness . . .  
(Fletcher, I, iii)

You search the Sore too deep; and let me tell you  
In any Other man, this had been Treason . . . .  
(Hayward, p. 168)

Besides, boldness can be an admirable quality, particularly in a soldier. In the same speech, Maximus in speaking of Valentinian refers to "the steering of the Empire" in Fletcher (I, iii) but to "the steering of his Empire" in Rochester (Hayward, p. 166). Here Rochester suggests Valentinian's personal responsibility to--as well as his power over--his



subjects, a power tantamount to possession. Where Fletcher's Aecius wonders "who we are, and how" (I, iii), Rochester's makes a fine distinction: "whose we are, and how" (Hayward, p. 166). Rochester's alterations here derive from the warning by Fletcher's Lucina that Valentinian must "consider what I am, and whose" (II, iv). The kind of possession Valentinian intends for Lucina is ultra vires.

Slight changes suggest Rochester's Aecius is in sympathy with the soldiers' complaints that he reports to Valentinian. Throughout the scene Rochester's Aecius addresses Valentinian as "Sir" instead of Fletcher's "Your Grace." The "Sir" sounds sharper, more brusque, even impatient. Rochester's Aecius predicts that the soldiers will

take their freedoms though the Sword  
Were in their throat.  
(Hayward, p. 174)

Fletcher has "Talk" instead of the more threatening "take." Rochester's Valentinian, in dismissing the report as that of "Some drunken dreamers" (Hayward, p. 174) instead of as "Some drunken dreams" (Fletcher, I, iii), shows a more general disdain, dismissing the men as well as the rumors. Rochester's Aecius most clearly shows his sympathy for the soldiers when he claims that with "more vexation hear I these Reproaches" (Hayward, p. 176). Fletcher's Aecius says, "with more vexation do I hear these tainters" (I, iii). "Tainters" allows for the possibility--in Aecius' mind--that the slurs are unjustified. Here the Earl's change coheres with Valentinian's remark:

Belike then you believe 'em, or at least  
Are glad they should be so.  
(Fletcher, I, iii)

Fletcher's king has no real foundation for such a suspicion; Rochester's has.



Rochester gives Maximus a longer speech in the opening of the gambling scene (III, i), in which Valentinian is to win from Maximus the ring with which to lure Lucina to the court for the rape. With the longer speech Maximus stands more prominent among Lycinius, Proculus, and Chylax, and is more clearly seen to be losing at the dice. By making Maximus appear more garrulous and more excited, Rochester prepares for his risking of the ring.

Rochester omits the first two speeches in the following exchange between Maximus and Chylax's after Valentinian has won Chylax's dappled horse:

Max. Your short horse is soon curried.

Chyl. So it seems, Sir,  
So may your Mare be too, if luck serve.

Max. Ha?

Chyl. Nothing my Lord, but grieving at  
my fortune.  
(Fletcher, II, i)

Not only is the bawdry unflattering to Lucina, but it makes Maximus seem more stupid than he is. Rochester replaces the passage with a suggestive reference to the terms by which Maximus is to redeem the ring the following day--he will exchange for it his "Arabian Horse," the pride of his stable. So Maximus' mind is set at rest in Rochester's version. And the implicit analogy between Lucina and the horse is elevated from a clumsy, bawdy metaphor to a subtle symbolic association.

Rochester adds the character of Balbus to bring news of the soldiers' mutiny for pay, the mutiny Maximus is sent to quell when Valentinian plans to rape Lucina. Maximus' departure is more credible, as a result, in Rochester than in Fletcher, where Valentinian calls Maximus aside after the dice game to tell him of the revolt, which he claims to have just remembered.







If Balbus is one happy addition Rochester makes to improve the characterisation in the play, Lycias is another, as remarkable a characterisation as is Dryden's eunuch, Alexas, in All for Love (1678). Rochester's Lycias is based on a minor character in Fletcher, also a eunuch, who has only one speech that is longer than a line. Rochester's Lycias has several fine speeches. He vividly and convincingly describes for Lucina the court scene which he claims is sending off Maximus to end the revolt. His apparent zeal in assisting the conspiracy suggests the eunuch's vicarious enjoyment of the rape, at least of its prospect.

More important, in his description of the court, Lycias picks the kind of detail that would stick in the passive mind, the feminine mind:

Throngs of ill-favour'd Faces fill'd with Scars  
Wait for Employments, praying hard for Wars.  
(Hayward, p. 193)

Lycias seems thrilled by his fear. Furthermore, the important theme of the conflict between private want and public supply appears in Lycias' comment on the bankers,

who with officious Diligence  
Lend money to supply the present need           )  
At treble Use that greater may succeed;        )  
So publick Wants will private Plenty breed.    )  
(Hayward, p. 193)

So natural is Lycias in his effusiveness, in his exasperating reluctance to get to the point, that Lucina is plausibly fooled into rushing to the court. Her impatience with Lycias clouds her original suspicion of the invitation, particularly when at the end of a long circumlocutive discourse Lycias lets slip that Maximus has long since verged on leaving:

The God that dwells in Eyes light on my Tongue  
Lest in my Message I his Passion wrong;  
You'll better guess the Anguish of his Heart,  
From what you Feel, than what I can impart;



But Madam, know the Moment I was come,  
 His watchful Eye perceiv'd me in the Room;  
 When with a quick precipitated haste                   )  
 From Caesar's Bosom where he stood embrac'd       )  
 Piercing the busie Crowd to me he past---       )  
 Tears in his Eyes; his Orders in his Hand,  
 He scarce had Breath to give this short Command:  
 With thy best speed to my Lucina fly,  
 If I must part unseen by her I dy,  
 Decrees inevitably from above,  
 And Fate which takes too little Care of Love,  
 Force me away: Tell her 'tis my Request,  
 By those kind Fires she kindled in my Breast;  
 Our future Hopes and all that we hold dear,  
 She instantly wou'd come and see me here.  
 That parting Griefs to her I may reveal  
 And on her Lips propitious Omens seal.  
 Affairs that press in this short space of time  
 Afford no other place without a Crime,  
 And that thou maist not fail of wisht-for Ends  
 In a success whereon my Life depends,  
 Give her this Ring.

(Hayward, pp. 194-195)

In his conspiratorial zeal, in his circumlocution, in his inadvertent irony, even in his parting on a proverb,<sup>12</sup> Lycias is a worthy descendent of Chaucer's Pandarus.

Rochester's Valentinian is a more complex and a more sympathetic figure than Fletcher's, in part, perhaps, because of the removal of most of the bawdry. Where Fletcher's Aecius describes the king as "a Prince so full of woman" (II, iii), Rochester's Aecius refers to him as "a Prince so full of Softness" (Hayward, p. 196). Pontius' "I blam'd him too for women" (Fletcher, II, iii) becomes "I blam'd him too for softness" (Hayward, p. 197). By thus deemphasising Valentinian's lechery, Rochester makes the rape of Lucina symptomatic of Valentinian's weakness, of his uneasy control over his power.

In the early interview with Aecius, Rochester adds the following speech by Maximus:



You'll say th'Emperor's young, and apt to take  
 Impression from his Pleasures,  
 Yet even his Errors have their good Effects,  
 For the same gentle temper which inclines  
 His Mind to Softness, does his Heart defend  
 From savage thoughts of Cruelty and Blood,  
 Which throu' the streets of Rome in streams did flow  
 From Hearts of Senators under the Reigns  
 Of our severer Warlike Emperors!  
 While under this scarcely one Criminal  
 Meets the hard Sentence of the dooming Law,  
 And the whole World dissolv'd into a Peace,  
 Owes its Security to this Man's Pleasures . . . .  
 (Hayward, p. 167)

The speech is significant in several ways. First, it helps characterise Maximus as a careful arriver at a decision.<sup>13</sup>

More important, however, Maximus' new sketch is of a likable man, a king of an easy and amiable nature, such as Charles II is known to have been.<sup>14</sup> Fletcher's Valentinian was rather "fear'd for blood, than lov'd for Bounty" (Fletcher, I, iii). We know that Rochester considered Charles "The easiest Prince and best bred Man alive."<sup>15</sup>

Where Fletcher's king rapes Lucina out of unmitigated lechery and violence, in Rochester's king the force is diluted by what seems to be a genuine love. In another addition by Rochester, Valentinian tells his panders--of all people!--

Is that an Object fit for my Desires  
 Which lies within the reach of your persuasions!  
 Had you by your infectious Industry       )  
 Shew'd my Lucina frail to that degree,    )  
 You had been damn'd for undeceiving me;    )  
 But to possess her chaste and uncorrupted,  
 There lies the Joy and Glory of my Love!  
 A Passion too refin'd for your dull Souls,  
 And such a Blessing as I scorn to owe  
 The gaining of to any but my self. . . .  
 (Hayward, p. 191)

Valentinian soars as a lover when he tells the panders:





Assist me now to quench my raging Flame,  
 'Tis not as heretofore a Lambent Fire,  
 Rais'd by some common Beauty in my Breast,  
 Vapours from Idleness or loose Desire,  
 By each new Motion easily supprest,  
 But a fixt Heat that robs me of all rest,  
 Before my Dazled Eyes cou'd you now place  
 A thousand willing Beauties to allure  
 And give me Lust for every loose Embrace.  
 Lucina's Love my Virtue would secure;  
 From the contagious Charm in vain I fly  
 T'has seiz'd upon my Heart, and may defie  
 That great Preservative Variety!

(Hayward, p. 172)

In Act V Rochester adds several speeches in which Valentinian bewails his loss of his Lucina:

raise me the dearest Beauty,  
 As when I forc'd her full of Chastity,  
 Or by the Gods--

(Hayward, p. 221)

Thus Rochester's Valentinian has a human weakness, man's lust for a woman, made all the more powerful by his extraordinary official power.

The speeches by Rochester's Valentinian abound in images of two kinds of bondage: Valentinian's bondage to Lucina as the conventional lover, a slave to his passion; and his bondage to the throne, the demands placed on him by his office. The metamorphosis of Valentinian's love for Lucina, its graduation from admiration to the compelling urge to possess, culminating in the rape, represents the subordination of the latter bondage to the former.

In the interview Rochester adds between Valentinian and Lucina, the king's first speech reads like a conventional love song:

Which way, Lucina, hope you to escape  
 The Censures both of Tyrannous and Proud,  
 While your Admirers languish'd by your Eyes  
 And at your feet an Emperor despairs . . .

(Hayward, p. 169)



Valentinian himself is too "Tyrannous and Proud" to remain in the pose of the conventional lover-slave. So "escape" in the first line of the passage just quoted fits tighter than an ordinary metaphor or hyperbole would. One by one the conventional poses of the lover-slave drop.

In his very next speech Valentinian bases his argument on what he considers to be his royal prerogative to possess her:

Am I not Emperor? This World my own?  
Given me without a Partner by the Gods?  
(Hayward, p. 170)

He has already forgotten the other-worldliness with which he had earlier flattered her; now Lucina seems but a chattel. We recall Rochester's earlier alteration of Aecius' warning: "whose we are, and how." In the BM manuscript, Lucina is denigrated even further than in the published quarto:

Each Man, each Beast, even to the smallest fly  
No Mortall Creature dare call his but I,  
(Hayward, p. 340)

Rochester's Lucina replies to Valentinian with real delicacy:

You like the Sun, Great Sir, are plac'd above,  
I, a low Mirtle, in the humble Vale,  
May flourish by your distant influence;  
But should you bend your Glories nearer me,  
Such Fatal Favour withers me to dust--  
Or I in foolish gratitude desire  
To kiss your feet, by whom we live and grow,  
To such a height I should in vain aspire,  
Who am already rooted here below  
Fixt in my Maximus's Breast I lie!  
Torn from that Bed, like gather'd Flow'rs, I die.  
(Hayward, p. 171)

By defining Valentinian's analogies further, Lucina turns them against him. She reminds him of the responsibilities that attend his powers. She pleads with him not to wither her with his fatal favour--a pun on "fever" perhaps, as controlled as the later pun on "bed"?--that he not misdirect against her his extraordinary power and authority.



What we have in this debate is an ironic cross of metaphors. One convention holds that as her lover, Valentinian must be Lucina's slave, the other that as her king, Valentinian must be her master. Either convention holds up until Valentinian's lust blurs his ability to discriminate between the two metaphors, between the separate areas of authority, and he attempts to force his political authority onto the amorous. Then both conventions break down; both conventions are violated by the rape.

Rochester clearly defines the rape as running counter to the universal order. Lucina recurs to her fear that any illegal relationship with Valentinian would evoke the vengeance of both man and god:

Had Heav'n design'd for me so great a Fate  
 As Caesar's Love I shou'd have been preserv'd,  
 By careful Providence for Him alone,  
 Not offer'd up at first to Maximus;  
 For Princes should not mingle with their Slaves,  
 Nor seek to quench their Thirst in troubled streams.  
 Nor am I fram'd with thoughts fit for a Throne.  
 To be commanded still has been my Joy;  
 And to Obey the height of my Ambition.  
 (Hayward, p. 171)

Valentinian momentarily accepts this view when he instructs Lucina to announce his challenge to the gods:

Fly to their Altars strait, and let 'em know  
 Now is their time to make me Friend or Foe;  
 If to my Wishes they your Heart incline,  
 Or th'are no longer Favourites of mine.  
 (Hayward, p. 171)

Rochester's manuscript has an additional four lines:

None in my world shall dare to owne a Power  
 That cant or will not help their Emperour  
 Incense no longer to those Gods shall burne  
 Unless they strive to serve me in their turne.  
 (Hayward, p. 340)

Valentinian constantly chafes under his responsibilities, even where he is most Machiavellian:





The Honesty of Aecius . . .  
 Is to be cherisht for the good it brings,  
 Not valu'd as a Merit in the Owner.  
 All Princes are Slaves bound up by Gratitude,  
 And Duty has no Claim beyond Acknowledgment.  
 (Hayward, p. 176)

Because kingship is a contract with reciprocal favors and responsibilities, Aecius' warning to Maximus holds for Valentinian as well:

nor may we justifie  
 Our private Jealousies, by open Force;  
 Wise or what else to me it matters not,  
 I am your Friend . . . .  
 (Hayward, p. 168)

It is significant that Maximus early in the play takes care to criticise Valentinian for social and not personal reasons:

I am concern'd for Rome, and for the World,  
 And when th'Emperor pleases to afford  
 Time from his Pleasures, to take care of those,  
 I am his Slave, and have a Sword and Life  
 Still ready for his Service.  
 (Hayward, p. 167)

Valentinian's eventual recovery from his indolence, his eventual assertion of force and power, his raping of Lucina, is a parody of heroism. One by one the king dismisses his reservations about the rape:

'Tis nobler like a Lion to invade  
 Where Appetite directs, and seize my Prey,  
 Than to wait tamely like a begging Dog,  
 Till dull Consent throws out the Scraps of Love.  
 I scorn those Gods who seek to cross my Wishes,  
 And will in spite of 'em be happy: Force  
 Of all the Powers is the most generous;  
 For what it gives, it freely does bestow,  
 Without the after Bribe of Gratitude.  
 (Hayward, pp. 205-206)

Here the sensualist is attempting to justify himself by fabricating an heroic ethic out of mere debauchery, to disguise sensual license as heroic activity.



It is against Valentinian's indolence that the soldiers have been revolting all along. In the early interview between Maximus and Aecius, Rochester changes Maximus' complaint subtly but significantly:

Or are we now no more the Sons of Romans  
 No more the followers of their happy fortune . . .  
 (Fletcher, I, iii)

Or are we now no more the Sons of Romans  
 No more the followers of their mighty Fortunes.  
 (Hayward, p. 167; italics mine)

The contrast is made between power and activity on the one hand, the might that was heroic Rome, and on the other, the ease, indolence and dissipation of Rome under Valentinian. Certainly the central theme of Rochester's Valentinian is the figuration of the conflict between good and evil as the conflict between activity and indolence.

Fletcher's play blurs the central conflict between Lucina and Valentinian, not just in the obscurity and centrality of Maximus' motives and machinations, but in the proliferation of hustling, bustling panders. Rochester clearly contrasts Lucina's activity and virtue to the indolence and venality of Valentinian. Lucina's first appearance in Rochester's play is in the company of Valentinian, their debate already under way. Fletcher introduces Lucina in debate with the panders and with their wives, with Valentinian's spokesmen but not with the kingly figure himself. To further stress Lucina's polar opposition to Valentinian, Rochester expands the debate he finds in Fletcher--by twenty-one lines--and he adds another exchange of 132 lines.<sup>16</sup> Even Lucina's dream on the eve of the rape represents the conflict in terms of herself and Valentinian alone:

Debates arose betwixt the Pow'rs above  
 And those below: Methoughts they talkt of Love.  
 And nam'd me often; but it could not be



Of any Love that had to do with me,  
 For all the while they talk'd and argu'd thus,  
 I never heard one word of Maximus.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Mishapen Monsters round in Measures went  
 Horrid in Form with Gestures insolent;  
 Grinning throu' Goatish Beards with half clos'd Eyes,  
 They look'd me in the face, frighted to rise!  
 (Hayward, pp. 192-193)

The contrast is between love and lust, Lucina and Valentinian.

This dance of the monsters prefigures Rochester's rape scene,  
 which occurs in the wings while a masque is performed on stage.  
 Valentinian has ordered Lycinius to have the masquers practise their  
 dance to conceal Lucina's cries:

And if by chance odd noises should be heard,  
 As Women's Shrieks, or so, say, 'tis a Play  
 Is practicing within.  
 Lycin. The Rape of Lucrece,  
 Or some such merry Prank--It shall be done Sir.  
 (Hayward, p. 205)

Scene III discovers the dancing masters practising:

1 Dan. That is the damn'st shuffling Step, Pox on't.  
 2 Dan. I shall never hit it.  
 Thou hast naturally  
 All the neat Motions of a merry Tailor,  
 Ten thousand Riggles with thy Toes inward,  
 Cut clear and strong: let thy Limbs play  
 about thee;  
 Keep time, and hold thy Back upright and firm:  
 It may prefer thee to a waiting Woman.  
 1 Dan. Or to her Lady, which is worse.  
 Enter Lycinius.  
 Lycin. Bless me, the loud Shreiks and horrid Outcries  
 Of the poor Lady! Ravishing d'ye call it?  
 She roars as if she were upon the Rack:  
 'Tis strange there should be such a difference  
 Betwixt half-ravishing, which most Women love,  
 And thorough force, which takes away all Blame,  
 And should be therefore welcome to the vertuous.  
 These tumbling Rogues, I fear, have overheard 'em;  
 But their Ears with their Brains are in their Heels.  
 Good morrow Gentlemen:  
 What, is all perfect? I have taken care  
 Your habits shall be rich and glorious.  
 3 Dan. That will set off. Pray sit down and see  
 How the last Entry I have made will please you.







Second Dance.  
 Lycin. 'Tis very fine indeed.  
 2 Dan. I hope so Sir--

/Ex.Dancers  
 (Hayward, p. 206)

Every line of the dancers ironically relates to the rape of the shrieking Lucina in the wings. The lines are not obscene because they have their meaning independent of their sexual suggestiveness. forced on them by the dramatic context. The fatuous remarks of the dancers, their earnest little steps, and the cold observations by Lycinius set up a macabre counterpoint to the horror of the rape.

Fletcher handles the rape scene with ludicrous coyness. First Valentinian denies all intention of raping Lucina:

I did but try your temper, ye are honest,  
 And with the commendations wait on that  
 I'll lead ye to your Lord, and give you to him.  
 (Fletcher, II, iv)

The fact that Lucina believes him is even more improbable than Valentinian's excuse. So she leaves with him and is presumably raped. When Chilax immediately enters and reports "'Tis done, Licinius," the audience has not had enough time to fully fathom what has happened, whether Valentinian has raped Lucina or surrendered to her virtue. Nor is Lucina's resistance to Valentinian as clear in Fletcher as it is in Rochester, where her shrieks are actually heard.

Rochester's rape scene has a clearly sensational effect on the audience. The time taken by the rape elapses on stage, counterpointed by the masquers. And Lucina's nightmare of a rape-dance comes literally true. More important the audience has shared with her the experience of the rape, the indifference of the dancers and the conspiracy of Lycinius. The actress playing Lucina points out in the epilogue:



Like me yee underwent the killing pain.  
 Did you not pity me, lament each groan,  
 When left with the wild Emperor alone?  
 I know in thought yee kindly bore a part,  
 Each had her Valentinian in her heart.  
 (Hayward, p. 349)

Perhaps here Rochester's surrealism graduates into pornography, and if Valentinian is taken as a representation of Charles II, the rape scene becomes a surrogate of Charles' relations with/to the court ladies in the audience.<sup>17</sup>

Be this as it may, Rochester's rape scene is perhaps the Earl's greatest improvement upon Fletcher, a chillingly effective piece of drama. In dramatic effectiveness, in skill of characterisation, in the fine ear for sound and for the exact suggestiveness of words, the Rochester version testifies to the skill of its writer. Rochester's Valentinian--if for its technical effects alone--deserves a central place in the Rochester canon, even in the annals of Restoration tragedy. Certainly the fine effects we have noted challenge Hayward's claim that

Lord Rochester had little of the playwright's sense of the theatre . . . . He lacked patience; steady application to the working out of an idea was foreign to his nature. He took Fletcher's tragedy and left it more or less as he found it.<sup>18</sup>

The reviser of Valentinian was not a flippant scribbler, but a sensitive writer with extraordinary powers of characterisation and a fine dramatic sense. He moreover had the patience to make the subtlest of alterations for fine nuances of meaning.



## CHAPTER V

### THE PLACE OF THE REVISIONS IN ROCHESTER'S THOUGHT

There is always the danger that a reader may unfairly attribute to the translator the views he is only translating. Rochester, however, only chose to translate or remodel works with whose point of view he was in sympathy, or at least, works where by a slight addition, deletion, or shift in emphasis, Rochester could make his point of view apparent.<sup>1</sup> Rochester's revisions of others' work, then, display the thought of the man as well as his characteristic tone, pace, and imagery.

Certainly Rochester was a more selective translator than Dryden. Unpressed by necessity, Rochester only rewrote what he wanted to. His translations of select passages from Lucretius and Seneca, for example, cohere with our general impression of Rochester's skepticism and the materialism of the court in general. Rochester's draft of Lucretius reads like the standard libertine defence of amorality:

The Gods, by right of Nature, must possess  
An Everlasting Age of Perfect Peace:  
Far off remov'd from us and our Affairs;  
Neither approach'd by Dangers, or by Cares:  
Rich in themselves, to whom we cannot add:  
Not pleas'd by Good Deeds; nor provok'd by Bad.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 50)

This neat, self-contained passage develops an interesting irony. From his perception of chaos the speaker derives an intuition of order, but the order provides very little reassurance. This order in the world, the speaker sees, is based on the insignificance of man, the





insignificance of the chaos, man's dangers and cares. The order obtains from the universal point of view. But it breaks down--and with it dissolves the reassurance--when one turns to it for personal support. This is the view expressed in Rochester's "Satire Against Mankind":

'tis this very reason I despise.  
This supernatural gift, that makes a Myte,  
Think he is the Image of the Infinite . . . .  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 120)

Rochester reacted against the courtier's and the rationalist's exaggerated sense of self-importance. In reaction, he turned to skepticism. Rochester's deathbed conversion is quite in keeping with his skepticism, because the true skeptic must eventually become skeptical about his own skepticism.

This backfiring doubt appears faintly in his translation of the Chorus' speech in Seneca's Troas. Seneca begins the speech with the question whether "the tale cheats timid souls," concluding yes. Rochester delays consideration of the soul's afterlife until the end of the poem. Then he is certain that there is no afterlife and that religious claims to the contrary are

Devis'd by Rogues, dreaded by Fools  
. . . senseless Stories, idle Tales,  
Dreams, Whimseys, and no more.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 49)

The same thought appears in a poem assigned to Rochester by Hayward, "Upon Love Fondly Refus'd for Conscience Sake" (pp. 84-85):

What's Conscience but a Bedlams midnight theam?  
Or nodding Nurses idle dream.

But in the Seneca translation, the very reiteration of their nothingness, the repetition of their insignificance, suggests that these "Dreams" and "Whimseys" actually have an existence, abstract but effective,



worrisome, busying the rogues, threatening the fools, and even gnawing at the ease of the skeptics. The skeptical Rochester here seems to protest too much.

One of the slight but significant additions Rochester makes to the speech in Seneca is the association of religion with pride. Rochester lets

the ambitious Zealot lay aside  
His hopes of Heav'n; (whose Faith is but his Pride). . . .

No such association is made in Seneca. Again one recalls Rochester's deflation of the mite that "Think [s] he is the Image of the Infinite." The parenthetic comment is ambiguous. The reader may infer that man's religion is nothing more than pride or inordinate aspiration. The word "Zealot" in the quotation suggests an alternate reading: as in Burns's Holy Willie, the faith by which is won admission to heaven breeds an intolerable pride. With the exception of this addition, Rochester's translation of Seneca follows Seneca's thought closely. In the translations of both Seneca and Lucretius, Rochester insists that material existence is ephemeral and transient, a momentary relief from the natural state of chaos and void, "Nothing":

Dead, we become the Lumber of the World;  
And to that Mass of Matter shall be swept,  
Where things destroy'd, with things unborn are kept.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 49)

The element of fear that looms large in the poems from Seneca and Lucretius also distinguishes Rochester's "Satire Against Mankind" from its model, Boileau's eighth satire. The mordancy of Rochester's satire derives mainly from his climactic reduction of all human motivation to fear. Thus Rochester finds man inferior to animals:



For hunger, or for Love, they fight, or tear,  
 Whilst wretched Man, is still in Arms for fear;  
 For fear he armes, and is of Armes afraid,  
 By fear, to fear, successively betray'd  
 Base fear, the source whence his best passion(s) came,  
 His boasted Honor, and his dear bought Fame.  
 That lust of Pow'r, to which he's such a Slave,  
 And for the which alone he dares be brave:

\* \* \* \* \*  
 The good he acts, the ill he does endure,  
 'Tis all for fear, to make himself secure.  
 Meerly for safety, after Fame we thirst,  
 For all Men, wou'd be Cowards if they durst.

(Pinto, Poems, p. 122)

The repetition of the word "fear" suggests man's obsession with it.

Boileau attributes to man a wider range of motive:

L'ambition, l'amour, l'avarice, la haine,  
 Tiennent comme un forçat son esprit à la chaîne.  
 (Oeuvres, II, p. 14)

Rochester's emphasis on fear is his main deviation from Hobbes as well as from Boileau. Pinto calls Rochester's poem "an attack on Man, but still more an attack on Reason, the idol of Hobbes and the freethinkers of the age."<sup>2</sup> But Rochester's views here are for the most part agreeable with Hobbes's. The two thinkers part company only on the dominance of fear as a motive in man's life. In De Corpore Politico or The Elements of Law, Hobbes contends that because of the "diversity of [man's] passions," because some men

hope for precedency and superiority above their fellows, not only when they are equal in power, but also when they are inferior; . . . those men who are moderate, and look for no more but equality of nature, shall be obnoxious to the force of others, that will attempt to subdue them. And from hence shall proceed a general diffidence in mankind, and mutual fear of one another.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, fear to Hobbes is a secondary motive while to Rochester it is the primary. In the multiplicity of motive in his view of man and in his stress on the materialist impulse, Boileau is closer to Hobbes than Rochester is. The quotation from Boileau above







recalls a passage elsewhere in Hobbes:

Competition of riches, honour, command, or other power,  
inclineth to contention, enmity, and war: because the  
way of one competitor, to the attaining of his desire,  
is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repel the other.<sup>4</sup>

Rochester makes little note of the vainglory Boileau perceives in man. In the "Satire," Rochester's vision of man is not of an aggressive, predatory creature with Hobbesian will, malice, and strength, but a wretched, pathetic, miserable creature, who cringes in fear and who irrationally lashes out at those around him.

In the "Satire against Mankind," Rochester calls for practical reason, ridiculing the abstract and pointless:

thoughts, are giv'n for Actions government,  
Where Action ceases, thoughts impertinent:  
Our Sphere of Action, is lifes happiness,  
And he who thinks Beyond, thinks like an Ass.  
Thus, whilst 'gainst false reas'ning I inveigh,  
I own right Reason, which I wou'd obey:  
That Reason that distinguishes by sense,  
And gives us Rules, of good, and ill from thence:  
That bounds desires, with a reforming Will,  
To keep 'em more in vigour, not to kill.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 121)

The distinction Rochester makes between abstract and "right" reason is foreshadowed by stanzas nine and ten of "Upon Nothing" (Ibid., p. 78). The "wise" of stanza nine are those men who recognize their limitations before the vast Nothing, who understand and accept the irrelevance of ignorance and--as in the translation of Lucretius--the irrelevance of virtue and wickedness. But the "Wise" of stanza ten are Rochester's villains, who pursue their vain--in the full sense of the word--speculation, who "Enquire, define, distinguish, teach, devise" (Ibid.).

Hobbes wrote in the same vein in the Leviathan:

Natural sense and imagination are not subject to absurdity,  
Nature itself cannot err; and as men abound in copiousness



of language, so they become more wise, or more mad than ordinary . . . . For words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools, that value them by the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero, or a Thomas, or any other doctor whatsoever, if but a man.<sup>5</sup>

The seventh cause of absurdity, Hobbes says, is

names that signify nothing; but are taken up, and learned by rote from the schools, as hypostatical, transubstantiate, consubstantiate, eternal-now, and the like canting of school-men . . . . They that have no science, are in better and nobler condition, with their natural prudence; than men, that by mis-reasoning, or by trusting them that reason wrong, fall upon false and absurd general rules. For ignorance of causes, and of rules, does not set men so far out of their way, as relying on false rules, and taking for causes of what they aspire to, those that are not so, but rather causes of the contrary.

To conclude, the light of human minds is perspicuous words, but by exact definitions first snuffed, and purged from ambiguity; reason is the pace; increase of science, the way; and the benefit of mankind, the end. And, on the contrary, metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words are like ignes fatui; and reasoning upon them is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention and sedition, or contempt.<sup>6</sup>

Hobbes here clearly influenced Rochester's

Reason, an Ignis fatuus, in the Mind,  
Which leaving light of Nature, sense behind;  
Pathless and dang'rous wand ring ways it takes,  
Through errors, Fenny-Boggs, and Thorny Brakes;  
Whilst the misguided follower, climbs with pain,  
Mountains of Whimseys, heap'd in his own Brain:  
Stumbling from thought to thought, falls head-long  
down,  
Into doubts boundless Sea, where like to drown,  
Books bear him up awhile, and makes him try,  
To swim with Bladders of Philosophy.  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 118)

Rochester's lines on appetite--

Your Reason hinders, mine helps t'enjoy,  
Renewing Appetites, yours wou'd destroy.  
My Reason is my Friend, yours is a Cheat,  
Hunger call's out, my Reason bids me eat;  
Perversely yours, your Appetite does mock,  
This asks for Food, that answers what's a Clock?  
(Ibid.)



--recall Hobbes's subjectivity:

Every man, for his own part calleth that which pleaseth, and is delightful to himself, good; and that evil which displeaseth him; insomuch that while every man differeth from one another in constitution, they differ also from one another concerning the common distinction of good and evil.<sup>7</sup>

Of pleasures or delights some arise from the sense of an object present; and those may be called pleasure of sense: the word 'sensual,' as it is used by those only that condemn them, having no place till there be laws. Of this kind are all operations and exonerations of the body, as also all that is pleasant in the sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch. Others arise from the expectation that proceeds from foresight of the end, or consequence of things; whether those things in the sense please or displease.

Mainly, though, it is in the preference for a practical reason over the abstract that Rochester echoes Hobbes in the "satire." All that Rochester's two kinds of reason--true and false--have in common with Boileau's is the fact that one is approved and the other attacked.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from finding fear man's basic motive, deemphasising man's greed, and approving of one kind of reason while attacking another, Rochester's poem further differs from Boileau's in omitting what Boas calls the animalitarian or theriophilic sentiments,<sup>10</sup> the idealising of animal life.

Mais pourtant sans lois et sans police,  
Sans craindre archers, prévôt, ni suppôt de justice,  
Voit-on les loups brigands, comme nous inhumains,  
Pour détrousser les loups courir les grands chemins?

. . . . .  
L'animal le plus fier qu'enfante la nature,  
Dans un autre animal respecte sa figure,  
De sa rage avec lui modère les accès,  
Vit sans bruit, sans débats, sans noise, sans procès.

. . . . .  
Chacun l'un avec l'autre, en toute sûreté,  
Vit sous les pures lois de la simple équité,  
L'homme seul, l'homme seul, en sa fureur extrême,  
Met un brutal honneur à s'égorger soi-même.

(Quevres, II, pp. 19-21)

So Boileau, and thus Rochester:







Be Judge your self, I'll bring it to the test,  
 Which is the basest Creature Man, or Beast?  
Birds, feed on Birds, Beasts, on each other prey,  
 But Savage Man alone, does Man, betray:  
 Prest by necessity, they Kill for Food,  
Man, undoes Man, to do himself no good.  
 With Teeth, and Claws by Nature arm'd they hunt,  
 Natures allowances, to supply their want.  
 But Man, with smiles, embraces, Friendships, praise,  
 Unhumanely his Fellows life betrays;  
 With voluntary pains, works his distress,  
 Not through necessity, but wantonness.  
 For hunger, or for Love, they fight, or tear,  
 Whilst wretched Man, is still in Arms for fear . . . .  
 (Pinto, Poems, pp. 121-122)

At the end of the poem Boileau even has an ass laughing at the human parade. Boileau does not recognise the possibility of strife among animals, of imperfection. But in his hard realistic vision Rochester does. The Earl bases his misanthropy--as his libertinism--on a vision of a chaotic universe. Rochester does not distinguish between man and beast by their actions--which would make for a superficial vision of the world--but in the crucial point, their motives. And man is mainly impelled, Rochester sees, by fear.

In the satires, Rochester was mainly indebted to Boileau for the model for his structure. But Fletcher's Valentinian interested Rochester more for its theme than its structure. Rochester was probably attracted to Fletcher's Valentinian because of its concern with the general conflict between the impulses of love and honor, the moral responsibility that a ruler by divine right has to his subjects, and the similarity the Earl doubtlessly perceived between the debauchery at the Restoration court and the legends of declining Rome.

In Rochester's play, Valentinian's crime is his failure to reconcile his love for Lucina with the demands placed on him as a king, loving--in other words--not wisely but too well. Rochester may sympathise with



Valentinian's love for Lucina, but he does not condone his abdication of regal responsibility. Rochester's Maximus appreciates the necessity of self-restraint in a king:

But Aecius--be sincere, do not defend  
 Actions and Principles your Soul abhors.  
 You know this Virtue is his greatest Vice:  
 Impunity is the highest Tyranny:  
 And what the fawning Court miscalls his Pleasures,  
 Exceeds the Moderation of a Man.  
 (Hayward, p. 167)

In his verse Rochester frequently discusses loose living in terms of kingship and formal hegemony, partly because most of his satire was specifically aimed at the loose court and partly because Rochester evidently considered the same self-control necessary in the individual citizen as in the body politic.<sup>11</sup> The merry adventures of Rochester's "Maim'd Debauchee" progress from private mischief to public menace:

I'll tell of Whores attack'd their Lords at home,  
 Bawds Quarters beaten up, and Fortress won:  
 Windows demolish'd, Watches overcome,  
 And handsome Ills by my contrivance done.  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 76)

Rochester frequently castigated Charles for the very loose life to which he personally spurred him on, the very loose life which he pretended to enjoy himself. Mr. Wilson resolves the paradox simply: "Rochester was a private gentleman, whose sins, unlike the King's, did not affect the nation."<sup>12</sup>

So harsh was Rochester's criticism of Charles that one modern critic is tempted to number Rochester with Buckingham among the Whig satirists of the period.<sup>13</sup> Rochester even satirises Charles in a prologue to another's play, Elkanah Settle's The Empress of Morocco. Pinto finds the prologue "a very graceful and felicitous compliment to the King."<sup>14</sup> But Pinto misses the bite that Rochester must surely



intend in the following passage from the prologue, spoken by a woman:

Since, 'tis well known, for your own part.(Great Prince)  
 'Gainst us you still have made a weak Defence . . .  
 Be generous, and wise, and take our part;  
 Remember we have Eyes, and you a Heart;  
 Else you may find, too late, that we are things  
 Born to kill Vassals, and to conquer Kings.  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 54)

Rochester's warning to Charles here is substantially the same as that in the revision, "In all Humanity we crave."

Rochester's most effective satire against Charles is the "History of Insipids." Here as well Rochester finds the king unkingly, the servant where he should be the master, failing to keep his passion and his reason in the proper order. Here Rochester uses harsher terms for the same point raised in the prologue to Settle's play:

New upstarts, Pimps, Bastards, Whores,  
 That Locust like devour the Land,  
 By shutting up the Exchequer Doors,  
 When thither our Mony was trapan'd.  
 Have rend'red C[harls] his Restauration,  
 But a small Blessing to the Nation.

Then C[harls] beware of thy Brother Y[ork]  
 Who to thy Government gives Law;  
 If once we fall to the old Sport,  
 You must again both to Breda:  
 Where Spight of all that would restore you,  
 Grown wise by wrongs, we shall abhor you.  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 112)

The threat of "the old Sport" recalls "The Commons' Petition." Or here:

Was ever Prince's Soul so meanly Poor,  
 To be a Slave to every little Whore?  
 . . . . .  
 How poorly squanderst thou thy seed away,  
 Who should get Kings for Nation to obey?  
 ("A Satyr Which the King Took out  
 of his Pocket," Hayward, pp. 91-93)

Methinks, I see our Mighty Monarch stand,  
 His pliant Angle trembling in his Hand,  
 Pleas'd with the Sport, good Man, nor does he know,  
 His easie Scepter bends and trembles so,





Fine Representative, indeed, of God,  
 Whose Scepter dwindles to a Fishing-Rod,  
 . . . . .  
 And howe'er weak and slender be the String,  
 Bait it with Whore, and it will hold a King,  
 Almighty Power of Women!

("The Royal Angler," Hayward, pp. 99-100)

The whole theme of "Woman's Usurpation" (Hayward, pp. 114-115) is that

Woman was made Man's Sovereignty to Own  
 And he as Monarch was to rule alone;  
 . . . . .  
 Heav'n did to him his Power Delegate,  
 O'er all the Universe he made him great;  
 His Power did the Largest Scepter sway,  
 The whole Creation did his Laws Obey.  
 No Limits there were set to his Commands, )  
 Tygers and Lions lick'd his Sacred Hands, )  
 And Savage Monsters gloried in his Bands. )  
 The Legislative Power was fixt in him,  
 Just Man, till Woman tempted him to sin.

The sin, of course, is extremity; the plight of postlapsarian man an appetite that outruns satisfaction. In his verse attacks on Charles and in Valentinian, Rochester calls for moderation in sexual activity. Yet for all this temperance in his mind, his appetites were not so easily controlled.<sup>15</sup>

Rochester intends Valentinian as a comment on Charles II and his court. Thus there is irony and yet a literal honesty as well in these lines in the epilogue:

Tis well the Scene is laid remote from hence,  
 'Twould bring in question else our Author's sense.  
 Two monstrous things, produc'd for this our Age,  
 And no where to be seen but on the Stage:  
 A Woman ravisht, and a Great man wise,  
 Nay honest too, without the least disguise.  
 Another Character deserves great blame,  
 A Cuckold daring to revenge his shame.

(Hayward, p. 349)

But as a member of Charles's court, Rochester himself is drawn into the range of satire in the play. Perhaps the key to Rochester's own relation



to his Valentinian is to be found in one of the additions he makes to an early speech by Maximus:

By the Gods,  
I'd rather be a Bondslave to his Panders,  
Constrain'd by Pow'r to survive their vicious Wills,  
Than bear the Infamy of being Held  
A Favourite to this foul flatter'd Tyrant.  
(Hayward, p. 166)

Apart from periods of ostensible penance in the tower Rochester remained a favorite of Charles, an ambivalent blessing, perhaps.<sup>16</sup> Possibly Rochester felt his youthful apprenticeship in venality to be inescapable; possibly it was. The criticism in Valentinian is a vital part of Rochester's confession that he is dissatisfied with the libertine's creed, another rumble from the Earl's restless conscience, whimsy though he might think his conscience to be. Ultimately Rochester is unable to second wholeheartedly Valentinian's assertion that "No Glory's vain, which does from Pleasure spring" (Hayward, p. 173).

In Chapter Four it was demonstrated that Rochester unifies his Valentinian by centering the conflict around Lucina and Valentinian, with Lucina representing moral activity and sexual passivity and Valentinian combining tendencies toward indolence and sexual activity. In Valentinian's last speeches before he rapes Lucina he expresses his lechery in pseudo-heroic terms, just as Rochester's speaker in the translation of Ovid, "How cold and slow to take my part," attempts to disguise sensuality as military valor. Rochester seems often to associate sensuality with indolence.<sup>17</sup> The same association lies behind the Ovid poem, where Rochester exhorts Cupid to perpetuate the torpor in which the speaker lies. These two revisions, then, suggest that Rochester is ironic in those passages where he avows sensual aims



in heroic terms, that Rochester's libertinism is not to be immediately inferred from his mock-heroic poses.

Basically Rochester's mock heroic professes a heroism of debauchery, attempting to lend the respectability of military heroism to the activity of the lowly sensualist. The pivot on which Rochester's irony turns is his basic association between sensuality and laziness, passivity; the sensual activity is an illusion, past which Rochester can see even if his speaker can not.

The pose may derive from "Militat omnis amans" in Ovid's Amores (I, ix): "Every lover is a soldier." In any event, one of Rochester's favorite methods of levelling personal abuse is by drawing a heroic parallel. Thus, in "A Satyr which the King Took out of his Pocket" (Hayward, p. 91), Rochester urges Charles to "Go practice Heliogabalus's Sin," referring to the legendary king who deflowered and wed a vestal virgin. Rochester later compares Charles to Nero and Charles' mistress, the Duchess of Cleveland, to Messalina who, though, unlike Cleveland, "was cloy'd with lust at last." In "The Royal Angler" (Hayward, pp. 99-100), Rochester alludes to Domitian, "When his Great Godship stoop'd to catching Flies." In this way Rochester defines a tradition of bad rule and places Charles in that tradition. At the same time that Rochester aligns Charles with historical examples of enormous irresponsibility, he implicitly threatens Charles with the same notoriety that has caused these ancient names to be remembered for hundreds of embarrassing years. This kind of satire was appropriate to the Restoration years. As J. H. Plumb notes of the later decade,

Political problems were then couched in historical terms. Men believed that by studying the country's past, especially its law, they would unravel those mysteries of authority and





obligation which so baffled them.<sup>18</sup>

In his satires on women Rochester's heroic allusions usually suggest grossness or satirize the speaker's self-content. Hence the two-fold allusion to Hercules and the Augean stables in "The Argument" (Thorpe, p. 35) and the extended reference to Greek and Roman heroes in "On the Charms of Hidden Treasure" (Hayward, pp. 115-116), an unusually clever obscenity.

One example of Rochester's mock-heroic vaunting of libertinism should suffice: "The Maim'd Debauchee." The poem opens on the pivotal analogy between sexual activity and military endeavour:

As some brave Admiral, in former War,  
Depriv'd of force, but prest with courage still,  
Two Rival-Fleets appearing from a far,  
Crawles to the top of an adjacent Hill.

From whence (with thoughts full of concern) he views  
The wise, and daring Conduct of the fight,  
And each bold Action, to his Mind renews,  
His present glory, and his past delight.  
(Thorpe, pp. 32-33)<sup>19</sup>

"Prest" suggests the lust that has outlived the ability to satisfy it. The usage is the same as in "Prest by necessity" in line 131 of the "Satire Against Mankind." The debauchee's crawling to the top of the hill suggests two things, the feeble movement of the debilitated and the surreptitious advance of the voyeur. Certainly "Crawles" undercuts the debauchee's claim to "present Glory."

The debauchee promises himself the one last pleasure available to the lecher, voyeurism:

when my Days of impotence approach,  
And I'm by Pox, and Wines unlucky chance,  
Drov'n from the pleasing Billows of debauch,  
On the dull Shore of lazy temperance.  
(Ibid., p. 33)

Here moderation or temperance is considered to be just laziness.



If one joy left the decrepit man is voyeurism and its expectation, the other derives from his self-justification, from his construction of a heroic ethic and dignity out of entirely unheroic adventures, his attempt to equate sexual activity with moral activity.

The revision of Ovid and Valentinian supports the belief that in "The Maim'd Debauchee" Rochester speaks through a persona. But so convincing is the speaker's pathetic rationalisation that--as in the case of Rochester's letter from Bajazet to Ephelia--the attitudes expressed have been mistaken to be Rochester's own. Berlind notes that the debauchee exemplifies Rochester's

characteristic technique of lambasting the social context of his moral commitments, and at the same time destroying himself . . . . Nor does Rochester go so far, in this poem, as to employ the device of a persona . . . . the poet himself is speaking.<sup>20</sup>

But the psychic distance between the poet and the poem--and it is from this psychic distance that the self-destruction of the speaker results--grows out of Rochester's self-awareness, Rochester's restless self-analysis. The debauchee remains self-unaware--and happy. This self-content makes the debauchee a persona, not Rochester speaking for himself.

Within the dramatic context of the poem, the debauchee is speaking to Cloris: "Nor shall our Love-fits Cloris be forgot." But the turning to Cloris is just an afterthought, perhaps even just a memory. With no characterization of any listener, the poem is not quite a dramatic monologue. The debauchee is trying to justify his voluptuous life, a life not of pleasures, note, but of pains:

My pains at last some respite shall afford,  
Whilst I behold the Battails you maintain,  
When Fleets of Glasses, Sail about the Board,  
From whose Broad-sides Volleys of Wit shall rain.  
(Thorpe, p. 33)



Similarly Rochester tells the post-boy of his "Heroick Scars and Wounds." The debauchee promises himself that "Past Joys [will] have more than paid what I endure," but in truth the past joys are really present pains. The speaker has no enthusiasm for his present sport. The first sentence in the poem continues until the end of the fifth stanza, suggesting the debauchee's enthusiasm, his effusive zeal, but only for the metaphor, however hollow, not for the activity itself.

In "Shelter'd in impotence," the debauchee admits his inescapable sensuality.<sup>21</sup> On the one hand a voyeur, on the other a man who can do no more but exhort others to mischief, the debauchee has nothing with which to console himself but to fabricate his creed of ostensible heroism. That Rochester can not fool himself as easily as his debauchee can is suggested in the Earl's epilogue to *Circe*:

Poets and Women have an Equal Right )  
 To hate the Dull, who Dead to all Delight )  
 Feel pain alone, and have no Joy but spite.)  
 'Twas Impotence did first this Vice begin,  
 Fooles censure Wit, as Old men raile of Sin,  
 Who Envy Pleasure which they cannot tast,  
 And good for nothing, wou'd be wise at last.  
 (Pinto, Poems p. 56)

In addition to the mock-heroic elements in Valentinian, there is also among Rochester's additions to Fletcher a remarkable image of mock-pastoralism. When Lucina awakens from her nightmare on the eve of her rape, her vision is of the actual human countryside stripped of its pretensions of pastoral innocence--the timidly bleating sheep are actually stampeding goats:

In what Fantastique new world have I been?  
 What Horrors past? what threatning Visions seen?  
 .....  
 Mishapen Monsters round in Measures went  
 Horrid in Form, with Gestures insolent;  
 Grinning throu' Goatish Beards with half clos'd Eyes,  
 They look'd me in the face, frighted to rise!







In vain I did attempt, methought no Ground  
 Was to support my sinking Footsteps sound.  
 In clammy Fogs like one half choak'd I lay,  
 Crying for help my Voyce was snatch'd away.  
 (Hayward, pp. 192-193)

Rochester continues the scene in rhyme, instead of in blank verse, perhaps to suggest that the nightmare runs on into the waking reality.

Rochester is well-known for his mock-pastoral poems, finely-controlled balances of pretense and truth, innocence and guilt, lyrical pose and dramatic revelation.<sup>22</sup> Rochester had "come to see that the heaven of the lusty courtier is precariously constructed over an underworld of ugliness, cruelty, and filth."<sup>23</sup>

Rochester's "Fair Cloris in a Pig-Stye lay" is based on the disparity between the dream of innocence and the fact of lust.<sup>24</sup> This disparity may be considered the central theme of Rochester's poetry and the unifying core of his personal malaise. Certainly Rochester's parody of Scroope is based on this very disparity.<sup>25</sup>

Herbert Davis is patently absurd to write of

that 'absolute Lord of Wit,' the Earl of Rochester, who was indeed quite unhampered in his profanity and little concerned with man's dignity.<sup>26</sup>

Rochester is really a moralist. His erotic poetry is loveless and unexciting, obscene, a cry of despair and not of exaltation. This even one of the Earl's contemporary enemies noted, but it is a point commonly overlooked today.<sup>27</sup> Rochester's libertinism is unique, opposed on the one hand to the self-sufficiency of a de Sade and a Wilde and on the other to the kind of spirit Baudelaire finds in Les Liaisons Dangereuses: "La fouterie et la gloire de la fouterie,"<sup>28</sup> the heroic libertinism that Rochester can only try on for size in a dramatic monologue and find a ridiculous misfit. Where the de Sade



libertine exults in sensuality as proof of his liberation, to Rochester the sensual life is a bondage to the senses, not liberty but imprisonment, promising escapes but providing nothing but imperfect enjoyments and physical disintegration.<sup>29</sup>

The meaning of this theme is broader than sexuality alone. As Bruser notes, Rochester is an inverse Freudian, so to speak, for instead of his frustrated sexual desire emerging intellectualised in literature "the frustrated intellectual embodies this sense of ineffectiveness in phallic symbol."<sup>30</sup> Thus the imperfect enjoyment poems "are not pornographic commentaries on the limits of lust. Rather, they are bitter admissions that the 'sublimar' the desire, the more impossible is its fulfillment."<sup>31</sup> Rochester sees the whole man in the sex act.

Shakespeare's *Troilus* suggests a parallel to our Rochester:

This is the monstrositie in loue Lady,  
that the will is infinite, and the  
execution confin'd; that the desire is  
boundlesse, and the act a slave to limit.  
(III, ii, ll. 88-90)

In a letter Rochester bewailed that there is "so greate a disproportion 'twixt our desires & what is ordained to content them" (Hayward, p. 191).

Rochester's Tarsander, in Actus Primus Scena Prima, complains:

Unhappy Mortals! whose sublimest joy,  
Preys on it self, and does it self destroy . . . .

What pleasure has a Gamester, if he knows,  
When e're he plays, that he must always lose?  
(Thorpe, p. 76)

In a word, Rochester exemplifies the tragedy of relentless self-awareness. He can not fool himself into contentment with the vacuous life of the senses. The sharp eye, the impatience, he turns against conventional literary poses in his parodies he also turns against his



own libertine life. Nicoll notes that "the age was debilitated: it was distinctly unheroic: and yet it was not as cynical as to throw over entirely the inculcation of heroism,"<sup>32</sup> Rochester saw that the court's and the libertine's inculcations of heroism were parodies of true heroism. He could not believe in his own heroic pose. And the Charybdis to this Scylla is that he could not believe in anything higher either.





## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Rochester's reputation for extemporaneous versifying and impromptu wit should not obscure the fine qualities of his work, his close attention to shades of meaning in a word or phrase, or the careful modulations in sound and rhythm. As well as displaying the same qualities of conciseness, energy, suggestiveness, and vividness for which his major works are known, Rochester's minor works are vital for a full understanding of his mind and his poetic bent.

Rochester's skepticism appears as clearly in his translations of Seneca and Lucretius as in "Upon Nothing." In the translation of Seneca, however, there is the additional implication that Rochester's conscience was effectively more than just a dream or a whimsey, that although he was driven by appetite, Rochester's self-awareness impeded his satisfaction.

Rochester regards his appetites as an enemy, subversive and threatening. He constantly images man in terms of hunger, in particular sexual hunger. So, for example, in "The Heavens carouse each Day a Cup" Rochester's speaker sees insatiable hunger as a condition basic to the universe. In his satires against women and against Charles, Rochester often describes sensuality as an imbalance in the individual's hegemony, the loss of self-control, the master falling slave to his lust, as in Valentinian, the master falling slave to his servant. These themes of thirst and lust and disruption of hegemony are all variations on



Rochester's central theme of man's bondage to his senses.

Valentinian and "The Commons' Petition" show Rochester to be critical of Charles for his loose kingship, his irresponsibility. But Rochester's variations on Fletcher show Rochester to be sympathetic to Valentinian's "softness." Moreover, in satirizing the panders in Valentinian's court, Rochester is obliquely firing at his own position. Though driven by lust, Rochester recognizes the emptiness of lust. He is ever conscious of the inadequacy of the strictly sensual life: Timon's hostess typifies both the body grown old and decayed and the appetite that painfully outruns the attempts to satisfy it.

Rochester, a libertine in his private--"personal" may be more appropriate--life, attacks the libertine creed in his poetry and drama. Rochester's libertine characters avow their libertinism in terms of religious dignity, pastoral innocence, or military heroism. But Rochester senses that the libertine's dignity is no more than a pose. For this reason the Earl's verse is so often ironic, so often spoken by a persona--such as Bajazet, the maim'd Debauchee, or the libertine speakers of "Vulcan, contrive me such a Cup," "O Love! how cold and slow to take my part," and "The Heavens carouse each Day a Cup"--that seems to hold the legendary Rochester's values, but actually lacks the Earl's self-awareness. Hence too Rochester's recurrence to the theme of self-unawareness in his poetry, as in "Timon" and in the "Satire Against Mankind," the skepticism at the rational prowess of the mite, man.

Rochester's "Timon" and "After Death nothing is and nothing Death" are excellent examples of Rochester's skill in compression, "Timon" and "Vulcan, contrive me such a Cup" of his energy, and both adaptations



from Boileau proof of the vividness of Rochester's pen. Rochester reveals a real comic sense in his minor works, particularly in "Timon" and in "The Heavens carouse each Day a Cup."

But the most important finding in our reading of Rochester's recastings is his dramatic sense. In "Timon" and "The Commons' Petition" Rochester demonstrates his skill in characterizing a figure by his speech, proves that the subtleties in Artemisa's letter to Cloe, for example, are intended. Rochester's dramatic sense accounts for his characteristic interweaving of the lyric and the dramatic, the idealistic and the realistic tones in Rochester's poetry. It is the Earl's dramatic sense that prompts him so often to record the stripping away of pretense from truth, dream from reality. And it is the dramatic sense that helps account for the ubiquitous eiron in Rochester's verse, lyrical and satiric alike.

Valentinian represents the fullest flowering of Rochester's dramatic sense. The play is more unified than Fletcher's, more clearly defining the central conflict between the emperor and Lucina. The scene openings are more arresting than Fletcher's, the characters more consistent and comprehensible. As well, Balbus and Lycias are happy additions to the play, Lycias in particular a subtle characterisation. By counterpointing the rape scene and the dance scene, Rochester not only achieves a chilling dramatic effect but replays his theme of the dream of innocence and grace belied by the fact of lust and coarseness.

Finally it is hoped that Rochester will finally be credited for his sense of decorum. In innumerable instances he seems to have Bowdlerised Fletcher's text of Valentinian, either to improve the sympathetic reaction to the emperor or to present Lucina in an idealising





light. Where Rochester does wax pornographic it is for a reason, as in the "Mock Song" to demonstrate in strikingly realistic terms the true facts that underlie the pose of graceful courtship; or in the satires, to strip off the pretensions to heroism and dignity. In "Why dost thou shade thy lovely face," however, Rochester demonstrates the lyricism that has made his songs so respected.

Throughout the recastings, Rochester's originality nowhere falls into doubt. Rochester invariably modernizes the tone of the work. In "Timon," the "Allusion" to Horace, and "Vulcan, contrive me such a Cup," not only are there allusions to specific figures in Restoration letters and politics, but the tone itself is racy, vigorous, the voice of the witty aristocrat. In addition, Rochester stamps his personal feeling of certainty on the "Satire Against Mankind" and the translation of Seneca.

Rochester as well takes the pains and liberties to fit the work precisely to his thought. His every recasting thus becomes a personal statement, either directly, as in "Satire Against Mankind," or obliquely, where he uses--as so often--the persona or eiron. To Boileau's version of "Timon," for instance, Rochester adds his own fascination with the problem of physical decay; to the work of Seneca, the association that he finds between religion and man's pride. Similarly Rochester imposes the mock-pastoral, realistic motif of Lucina's dream and bases his reorganisation of Valentinian on the idea of mock-heroism.

Finally, Rochester exploits the possibilities of the fact of translation. In the "Allusion" to Horace Rochester implies that the irreproachable authority, Horace himself, is seconding every detail in Rochester's criticism of contemporary letters. So too Quarles's poem



shadows "Why dost thou shade thy lovely face?" with the threat of blasphemy. And in "The Commons' Petition" Rochester gives Charles II friendlier advice than in most of his other satires, but made all the firmer, all the more effective, by the pale shadow of the Whitehall scaffold that the original throws across Rochester's page.

Walter Allen has explained the mystical basis of much literary sex:

For it is mainly in sex . . . that ordinary men and women can come into contact with mystery, can become aware of powers bigger than themselves . . .

The best erotic poems, he continues,

as poetry and as records of experience are those which treat sex not as a game but as something much more like an obsession, even, perhaps like a grim all-out wrestling bout of the body and spirit to which both partners, if that is the right word, are inexorably condemned.<sup>1</sup>

Rochester's erotic verse is about the human predicament, man's amphibious life in both the flesh and the spirit, man insatiably hungry yet pretending to delicacy, innocence, beauty, self-control, rationalism, even grace. Rochester always bemoans the disparity between the dignity and heroism to which man pretends and the animalism and hunger which are his lot. So much of Rochester's verse is dramatic because it involves the stripping away of a veneer, the revelation of true character beneath a pose. To ignore the use of the persona, to read Rochester's poetry as his own self-unaware statement, is to ignore Rochester's consistency and his great achievement, the disillusioned descant "sung beside."<sup>2</sup>

The time has passed when a reader must bemoan the "waste" of Rochester's genius. His lasting significance as a poet lies in that very vein of poetry, that very vision of the human dilemma, that



consigned him to a closed drawer in Pepys's desk. Rochester's importance to us lies in his uncompromising vision of man rooted in the flesh yet unable to escape either the appetites of the flesh or the dreams of spirituality and innocence beyond. In Rochester's verse the magniloquent and the mundane tones and rhythms meet time and again to do battle; so too in his thought.





#### APPENDIX: Rochester vs. Radclyffe

In an article in PMLA for 1957, David Vieth suggests that Edward Radclyffe, second Earl of Derwentwater, is the "My Lord R" responsible for seven poems Jacob Tonson published in 1693.<sup>1</sup> Hayward includes the poems in his edition of Rochester on the authority of marginal attributions to our Earl made in extant copies. Among the poems Vieth attributes to Radclyffe and Hayward to Rochester are a translation from Ovid entitled "Apollo's Grief," an imitation of Cornelius Gallus, and two imitations from Horace.

Vieth argues that the attribution by Tonson, the most reliable publisher of his day, of the poems to Radclyffe should be final. The two Rochester poems in the collection bear Rochester's name in full,<sup>2</sup> Rochester having been dead thirteen years, and Radclyffe still alive. The argument is convincing. Yet there remains the possibility that Tonson, though honest, may have been misinformed. Nor may one discount completely the possibility that Tonson simply reprinted the abbreviated ascription he found in a thirteen-year-old manuscript.

The poems contain strokes of expression and dramatic sense that seem quite beyond the powers of such a novice as Radclyffe, a gentleman known for his generosity as a patron and his mediocrity as a poet. While Whitfield finds the Apollo poem "undistinguished,"<sup>3</sup> Prinz recognizes in it Rochester's "own emotional tinge," the personal stamp Rochester usually left on his imitations. Prinz finds in the "clever imitation of Ovid . . . not only a fine sway of imagination, but also



the breath of noble and true melancholy."<sup>4</sup>

My Lord R. has very carefully refashioned an excerpt from Book X of Ovid's Metamorphosis to make "Apollo's Grief" an independent poem (Hayward, p. 119). His Apollo confesses to have "weary grow[n] of Immortality," so the audience knows why he can not commit suicide, a point that a literal translation of the passage might not have made so clearly but left to its context. Rochester--if he is the poet--carefully guards against the bathetic. No such lapse occurs here as the indecorum in Golding's translation of the passage: "Both in my mynd and in my mouth thou evermore shalt bee."<sup>5</sup> Such anticipation of effect bespeaks an experienced hand.

Furthermore Rochester completely subordinates any suggestion of Apollo's guilt to his feeling of grief. He omits the following passage in Ovid:

videoque tuum, mea crimina, vulnus. tu dolor es facinusque  
meum: mea dextera leto inscribenda tuo est. ego sum tibi  
funeris auctor. quae mea culpa tamen, nisi si lusisse  
vocari culpa potest, nisi culpa potest et amasse vocari?<sup>6</sup>

Instead Rochester briefly mentions the accident, then stresses the grievous consequences: "What have I done my lovely Boy?" So weighted is Rochester's wording that only in this passage does he suggest the idea of waste found in Ovid's "prima fraudate juventa," "defrauded of thy youth's prime." A more elaborate bewailing of fraud would jar the spirit of the passage as a whole; the metaphor would suggest insincere grief, as Johnson charges of "Lycidas."

Finally the imitator stresses the immediacy of the speech. He omits Ovid's detailed description of the flower into which Hyacinth has metamorphosed; he omits the explanation of the flower's letters;



he does not elaborate upon the flower's eventual association with the hero Ajax. The result is that a strong sense of the immediate tragedy pervades the entire poem: one hears Apollo speak his grief, with no other prophecy than his self-consolation.

The two imitations from Horace show Rochester's touch even more clearly. Prinz does not think "While I was Monarch of your Heart" (Hayward, p. 137) is Rochester's,<sup>7</sup> but Whitfield writes "We should have foretold that the famous ninth ode of the third book would find a response in Rochester."<sup>8</sup>

For one thing, Rochester wanders more freely from the original than do Jonson and Herrick in their translations.<sup>9</sup> In the first stanza Jonson and Herrick both follow Horace in introducing "the Persian king" as an external analogy, as a bit of rhetoric. Rochester, however, develops the same idea of monarchy out of the paragraph itself, making, as it were, of a strained simile an easy metaphor:

While I was Monarch of your Heart,  
Crown'd with a Love where none had part,  
Each Mortal did with Envy die;  
No God but wished that he were I.

The poem also has Rochester's conversational flavor. For one thing, Rochester's Lydia and Horace do not name each other for most of the poem but speak to each other directly. Further, where Jonson translates Lydia's

Whilst Horace lov'd no Mistress more,  
Nor after Chloe did his Lydia sound . . . ,

Rochester's Lydia seems truer to life in her reluctance to refer to her rival by name:

While you adored no charms but mine,  
And vowed that they did all out-shine;  
More celebrated was My Name  
Than that of the bright Grecian Dame.







This recalls the delicacy that Rochester suggests in his pose as Artemisa writing Cloe:

how (my dearest Cloe) shou'd I set  
My Pen to Write, what I wou'd fain forget?  
(Pinto, Poems, p. 80)

Prithee farewell, we'll meet again anon,  
The necessary thing, bows and is gone.  
(Thorpe, p. 22)<sup>10</sup>

This recalls Rochester's extraordinary skill in creating the female voice in his poems, as demonstrated by his Lucina in Valentinian, in "The Platonick Lady," and particularly in "Nothing adds to your fond Fire," so convincingly feminine that Pinto attributes it to Elizabeth Malet, wife of the Earl.<sup>11</sup>

Rochester omits Horace's mention of Lydia's skill in song and at the lyre, perhaps because he wishes to depict a more delicate love than would be associated with amusement or entertainment. Man's dignity is reduced by comparing him to an entertainer.<sup>12</sup>

Of the seven poems Vieth moves from the Rochester canon to the Radclyffe, these two alone seem completely beyond the latter's ability. The Ovid poem is too dramatic, too intense and too free a treatment to be the work of a dabbler. "Conquer'd with soft and pleasing charms" (Hayward, pp. 135-136) is awkward enough to be Radclyff's. But in My Lord R.'s

We're wrapt in Mists of endless Night.  
Once come to these dark Cells of which we're told  
So many strange romantick Tales of old  
(In things unkown Invention's justly bold) . . . ,

we have skeptical sentiments that could be Rochester's. Moreover the personal bias, the shading, the variation on the original here, is characteristically Rochester's.



Of course such internal evidence alone does not prove conclusively the authorship of a poem. Nor do the manuscript ascriptions to Rochester prove his authorship beyond a doubt. The touches of Rochester we have found in *My Lord R.*, however, suggest that perhaps we must cast about for a more capable poet than Radclyffe, that we should not discount completely the possibility of Rochester's authorship of at least one or two of them or--at the very least--that the Earl's influence upon his lesser contemporaries helped save at least one versifier from utter worthlessness.



## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

1. Johannes Prinz, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, His Life and Writings (Leipzig: Mayer and Müller, 1927), p. 118.

2. J. H. Wilson, Court Wits of the Restoration (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), p. 116.

3. For a summary of Rochester's skill and fame as a lyricist, see David Vieth, "A New Song by Rochester," TLS, Nov. 6, 1953.

4. Hayward, p. 269. References to Hayward are to Rochester's Collected Works, ed. by John Hayward (New York: Nonesuch Press, 1926), a limited edition. Wherever possible, Rochester's poetry is quoted from the most common edition, Poems, ed. by V. de Sola Pinto (Muses' Library; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953). Poems omitted or Bowdlerised in Pinto's text are quoted from James Thorpe's facsimile reprint of the 1680 Poems on Several Occasions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950).

5. "Pleasure did not satisfy him, as it might coarser clay. He longed to believe and could not, and so his desire for revenge on the world that swindled him, on the men who fell short of what he wanted to think was good." The revenge motive may be ill-grounded but the remainder of Kenneth Murdock's statement is perceptive (The Sun at Noon; New York: Macmillan, 1939; p. 303). Hayward refers to Rochester's "melancholy and fits of loneliness and depression" (Op. cit., p. xlviii).

6. "Personae," Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature, ed. by C. C. Camden (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1963), p. 30.

7. For his possible psychopathology in this regard--and thence a kinship with Titus Oates, James Macpherson, etc.--see Phyllis Greenacre, "The Impostor," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, XXVII (1958), pp. 359-382. In Court Wits (op. cit., p. 20), Wilson refers to the courtiers' "careless affectation of anonymity." More exact, perhaps, is Alexander Bendo's (Rochester's) confession to "the restless Itch of deceiving" (The Famous Pathologist, or The noble mountebank, ed. by V. de Sola Pinto; "Nottingham University Miscellany," No. 1; Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1961; p. 32).

8. Bruce Berlind, Studies in Rochester and his Circle (Unpublished DD; Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, 1957), p. 88, n. 14.





9. Ibid.

10. Rochester uses the feminine voice in the following poems: "The Platonick Lady," "Nothing adds to your fond fire," "A Dialogue between Strephon and Daphne," "A Song of a Young Lady To her Ancient Lover," "A Letter from Artemisa in the Town to Cloe in the Country," perhaps "What vaine unnecessary things are men," samples culled from Pinto's scanty edition alone. As well Rochester wrote several prologues and epilogues for female speakers, not to mention the speeches for Lucina--and the eunuch--in Valentinian.

11. Berlind, op cit., p. 28. For an example of Rochester's deliberate self-satire, see John Harold Wilson, "Rochester's 'A Buffoon Conceit,'" MLN, LVI (1941), pp. 372-73. The tendency to satirize himself makes Rochester the likely author of such poems as "Earle of Rochester's Conference with a Post Boy," printed in Pinto's appendix of poems of doubtful authorship (Poems, p. 147).

12. Of this, Rochester's "All my past Life," Charles Norman remarks, "The thrill of the poem is a thrill of fidelity, and not of infidelity, but the fidelity is that of the whole concentrated instant" (Rake Rochester; New York: Crown Publishers, 1954; p. 143). For further discussion of the pleasure principle and Rochester, see David Vieth, Attribution in Restoration Poetry: A Study of Rochester's 'Poems' of 1680 ("Yale University Studies in English," No. 153; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 135ff. For a variant version of "All my past Life"--one more coherent with "Upon Nothing"--see Thorpe, pp. 69-70.

13. The myth perhaps begins with John Dryden's Preface to All for Love, written in retaliation for Rochester's "Allusion" to Horace's Tenth satire. Dryden seems to be trying to exclude Rochester from the true poets and to number him among the false, by accusing the Earl of bias, of lacking the taste for tragedy, of being an immodest self-displayer, of writing out of wantonness and not necessity, and of censuring other writers unfairly. See F. L. Huntley, "Dryden, Rochester and the Eighth Satire of Juvenal," PQ, XVIII (1939), pp. 269-84.

The most recent perpetrator of the myth is Rochester's popularizer, V. de Sola Pinto. Armed with the parallels of Spenser-Sidney, Richardson-Fielding, Wordsworth-Coleridge, Byron-Shelley, and Tennyson-Swinburne, Pinto suggests Dryden and Rochester are a mutually redefining pair, the industrious professional on the one hand and the brilliant, dynamic, aristocratic amateur on the other . . . . In all these instances there seems to have been between the aristocrat and the professional a curious ambiguous relationship which is partly attraction and partly antagonism . . . . Much of the strength of English literature at any rate from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, was, I suggest, due to this tension and interplay between the aristocrat and the professional, the audacious rebel and the patient craftsman, or to use Nietzsche's famous distinction, the Dionysian and the Apollonian poet.

("Rochester and Dryden,"  
Renaissance and Modern Studies,  
V [1961] pp. 30-31)



Johannes Prinz differs:

Rochester represents the type of egocentric artist who does not acknowledge any responsibility other than that of the blameless artistic finish of his productions, and to whom all further considerations such as conventional decency and proper behavior are negligible properties.

(Prinz, op. cit., p. 157)

14. Hayward claims Rochester was "incurably lazy. There is strength in his plagiarism, a quality far removed from servile imitation, which might have given the world greater and more original poems had he used it with less economy and more care" (op. cit., p. xlvi).

Thomas Longueville also fails to recognize that it is the Earl's unique sensitivity to the exact nature of his experience that makes Rochester the best court poet of the period: "The verses of Rochester might have been improved by either tea or coffee" (Rochester and other Literary Bakes of the Court of Charles II; London: Longmans, Green, 1902; p. 24). Longueville is of an age remote from ours ("we know that Rochester's father was intemperate and licentious, and that the son inherited both of these tendencies," Ibid., p. 319). But on the waste of Rochester's genius Longueville's remarks are typical of many comments even today. Rochester's main interest to us is as Rochester, that fascinating combination of the lyricist and the libeller, the dreamer and the damner. Certainly Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, is Rochester's equal as a lyricist, and Dryden as a satirist; the combination makes Rochester unique and meaningful.

15. "'A very Heroical Epistle in Answer to Ephelia' is the second of a pair of verse epistles purportedly exchanged by a man and woman bearing the pseudonyms Bajazet and Ephelia . . . . Bajazet is a persona representing John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, whose conceit and self-sufficiency are satirized in both poems but especially in the second" (Vieth, Attribution, p. 107). The satire is discussed in Vieth, pp. 103-36.

16. Singled out as the most recent--and certainly most exact--paper on Rochester (Kenyon Review, XXVI, Spring, 1964, pp. 354-68). In Rochester "the libertine becomes the detached participant in sensual life, unable either to satisfy his body or dispose of his values. He is cursed with passionate self-consciousness, the first element of morality" (Ibid., p. 356). "In general terms his praise of Nature parodies the praise of Christian poets for God. He uses the tone, the language, and the schema of religious belief . . . . When Rochester wrote of the infinity and plenitude of the world it was to intimate the nature of religious illusion. In his poems amplitude and plenitude are sexual in their insatiableness" (Ibid., p. 360). "The dandy in the poems of Rochester is involved in decadence because that is a sign of life. Yet the failure of the senses is Rochester's great obsession" (Ibid., p. 368).





## CHAPTER II

1. Seneca, Seneca's Tragedies, translated by F. J. Miller (2 vols.; The Loeb Classical Library; London: Heinemann, 1927), Vol. II, pp. 120-223.

2. Pinto, Poems, p. 49.

3. Thorpe, Poems, p. 50.

4. This can be compared with a prose translation of Ovid:  
The tired-out soldier is let retire to the acres he received;  
the race-horse free from the course is sent to the pastures;  
and the long docks receive to cover the drawn-up ship of pine,  
and the harmless foil is claimed when the sword has been laid  
aside. I, too, who have served so oft in the wars of woman's  
love--'twere time, my labours o'er, I liv'd in peace.

(Ovid, Heroides and Amores, trans. by  
Grant Showerman; Loeb Classical Library;  
London: Heinemann, 1947; p. 409)

5. Christopher Marlowe, The Works, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke  
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), pp. 572-73. For example, the passage  
from Rochester that begins "We thine own Slaves" Marlowe translates  
as follows:

We people wholly giuen thee feele thine armes,  
Thy dull hand stayes thy striuing enemies harmes.

A prose translation reads as follows:

We, a people who have surrendered to thee, feel the weight of  
thy weapons; with the foe that resists, thy hand is slow to  
move.

(Showerman, op. cit.)

Rochester's "Wretch" in the quotation replaces Marlow's "hapless."  
Where Marlowe has "Ioyes with vncertaine faith thou takest and brings,"  
Rochester has the direct "Who knows, when joy, or Anguish, thou wilt  
bring?" Where Marlowe has "Let her enjoy me oft, oft be debard" (l.46),  
Rochester appears more diplomatic: "Often may I enjoy, oft be deny'd."  
Showerman echoes Rochester's more chivalrous wording: "Let me oft  
enjoy my lady-love, oft be repulsed away" (op. cit., p. 411).

6. Anacreontea, ed. and trans. J. H. Edmonds (2 vols; The Loeb  
Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), II, ii,  
p. 23.

7. V. de Sola Pinto, Enthusiast in Wit (London: Routledge &  
Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 65.

8. Thorpe, Poems, p. 57. Pinto reprints the 1691 version, Thorpe  
the 1680, the more authentic.

9. Rochester considered the word "cunt" particularly unaesthetic.  
In his "Allusion to Horace" Rochester writes of Dryden's early heavy-  
handedness:





when he wou'd be sharp; he still was blunt,  
 To frisk his frolicque fancy, he'd cry C--t,  
 Wou'd give the Ladies, a dry Bawdy bob,  
 And thus he got the name of Poet Squab.  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 97)

10. Benjamin Boyce, The Polemic Character: 1640-61 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1955), p. 37.

11. Pinto, Enthusiast, p. 98.

12. Samuel Johnson, The Lives of the Poets, ed. L. A. Hind (2 vols.; London: J. M. Dent, 1953), II, p. 192:

This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiarised, by adapting their sentiments to modern topics, by making Horace say of Shakespeare what he originally said of Ennius . . . was first practised in the reign of Charles the Second by Oldham and Rochester; at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky.

13. Horace, Complete Works, trans. various hands (Everyman Library; London: J. M. Dent, n.d.), pp. 179-80.

14. Boileau, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. A. C. Gidel (4 vols.; Paris: Garnier Frères, 1870), I, p. 46.

15. Horace, trans. Smart, p. 179.

16. Pinto in a note on the poem (Poems, p. 195) quotes Dryden's Epilogue to The Second Part of the Conquest of Granada and refers to Dryden's Defence of the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age, both published in 1672.

17. New Light on Dr. Johnson, ed. F. W. Hilles (New York: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 37.

18. Smart translation, p. 177.

19. For example, the satire on Bayes's (Dryden's) commonplace book in Buckingham's The Rehearsal, I, i, 23-33:

Why, sir, when I have anything to invent, I never trouble my head about it, as other men do; but presently turn over this book, and there I have, at one view, all the Perseus, Montaigne, Seneca's tragedies, Horace, Juvenal, Claudian, Pliny, Plutarch's Lives, and the rest, have ever thought upon this subject; and so, in a trice, by leaving out a few words or putting in others of my own, the business is done.

20. Smart translation, p. 177.

21. Ibid.



22. Ibid., p. 179.

23. cf. Vieth, Attribution, p. 295.

24. Smart translation, p. 179.

25. Of course, the literary debate between the spider and the bee does not start with Swift; it dates back at least to Bacon's Novum Organum.

26. VI, p. 908.

27. Pinto, Enthusiast, pp. 171-72. Rochester befriended the twenty-five-year-old hack poet, introduced him to London society, and was repaid by several verse compliments, including the dedication of Oldham's imitation of Moschus's Lament for Bion. Oldham's notebook was found to contain copies of several Rochester poems, including the "Satire Against Mankind." A comparison of this Rochester poem with Oldham's imitation of Boileau's eighth satire is convincing proof of Rochester's originality in recasting another's work.

28. Ben Jonson, Timber: or Discoveries (1620-35?), in Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. J. E. Spingarn (3 vols.; Illinois: Oxford University Press, 1950), I, pp. 53-54:

to bee able to convert the substance or Riches of an other  
Poet to his own use. To make choise of one excellent man  
above all the rest, and so to follow him till he grow very  
Hee, or so like him as the Copie may be mistaken for the  
Principall.

Jonson's own reworking of the classics are for the most part literal translations. Indeed looseness in translation has been considered sufficient evidence to discount Jonson's possible authorship of a work (Ben Jonson, The Poems, ed. C. B. Johnston; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959; p. 341). At the freest Jonson becomes colloquial, as in his translation of Horace's second epode:

Th'Ionian God-wit, nor the Ginny hen  
Could not goe downe my belly then.

(Ibid., p. 253)

Even in this translation Jonson fails to find a contemporary to replace Horace's reference to the "Usurer Alphius." Jonson's translations remain impersonal exercises; he remains outside the poem, unengaged in its statement. There is no pretense to sincerity in such a passage as this, from Horace's Ode I, Book IV:

I am not such, as in the Reigne  
Of the good Cynara I was.

(Ibid., p. 254)

Perhaps the closest Jonson comes to imitation--and this seems inadvertent--is his reworking of Catullus' Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus. In Jonson's version, "Come my Celia, let us prove," the name of the girl is up-dated to fit the modern pastoral convention. Furthermore Jonson ironically updates the Roman superstition surrounding the word Invidere:





Cannot we delude the eyes  
 Of a few poore houshold spyes?  
 Or his easier cares beguile,  
 So removed by our wile?  
 'Tis no sinne, loves fruit to steale,  
 But the sweet theft to reveale:  
 To be taken, to be seene,  
 These have crimes accounted beene.

(Ibid., p. 85)

Of course it may be argued that Jonson is just writing another carpe diem song of seduction and not imitating Catullus. But again the fact of translation is significant. In its setting in Jonson's Volpone, Volpone emerges as a perverse parody of the classical lover. The last two lines quoted take on a chilling literalness, spoken by a thief not a lover.

29. In his Preface to the Seaven Bookes of the Iliades, George Chapman shows that the efficacy of literal translation was doubted as early as 1598.

The worth of a skilfull and worthy translator is to obserue the sentences, figures, and formes of speech proposed in his author, his true sence and height, and to adorne them with figures and formes of oration fitted to the originall in the same tongue to which they are translated.

(Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. Gregory Smith, 2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1950; II, p. 296)

In other words, Chapman contends, true translation allows for free rephrasing and the translator's interpretation of his original.

Sir John Denham is usually credited with the earliest advocacy of free translation in seventeenth-century English letters. Applauding Fanshawe's translation of Pastor Fido, Denham writes in 1643-44,

A new and nobler way thou dost pursue  
 To make Translations and Translators too.  
 They but preserve the Ashes, thou the Flame,  
 True to his sense, but truer to his fame.  
 Foording his current, where thou find'st it low  
 Let'st in thine own to make it rise and flow;  
 Wisely restoring whatsoever grace  
 It lost by change of Times, or Tongues, or Place.  
 Nor fetter'd to his Numbers, and his Times,  
 Betray'st his Musick to unhappy Rimes . . . .

(Sir John Denham, The Poetical Works, ed. T. H. Banks, Jr.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928; pp. 143-44)

But Denham still feels obliged to add:

Yet after all, (lest we should think it thine)  
 Thy spirit to his circle dost confine.

(Ibid.)

In poetic practice, Denham's greatest liberty is his epigrammatic compression (Ibid., pp. 161-232). His practice shows none of the freedom he advocates in his preface of 1656 to a translation of The Destruction of Troy:





There are so few Translations which deserve praise, that I scarce ever saw any which deserv'd pardon . . . .

I conceive it a vulgar error in translating Poets, to affect being Fidus Interpres; let that care be with them who deal in matters of Fact, or matters of Faith: but whosoever aims at it in Poetry, as he attempts what is not required, so he shall never perform what he attempts; for it is not his business alone to translate Language into Language, but Poesie into Poesie; & Poesie is of so subtile a spirit, that in pouring out of one Language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a Caput mortuum, there being certain Graces and Happinesses peculiar to every Language, which gives life and energy to the words; and whosoever offers at Verbal Translation, shall have . . . misfortune . . . for the grace of the Latine will be lost by being turned into English words; and the grace of the English, by being turned into the Latine Phrase.

(Ibid., pp. 159-60)

In his preface of 1656 to his Pindarique Odes, Abraham Cowley seconds Denham's argument. Freedom in paraphrase is necessary to compensate for the disparity in time, in place, in literary form, in metre, and in language, between the original and the translation. "If a man should undertake to translate Pindar word for word, it would be thought that one Mad man has translated another," Cowley explains.

To supply the lost Excellencies of another Language with new ones . . . . I have in these two Odes of Pindar taken, left out, and added what I please; nor make it so much my aim to let the Reader know precisely what he spoke, as what was his way and manner of speaking; which has not been yet (that I know of) introduced into English, though it be the noblest and highest kind of writing in Verse.

(Abraham Cowley, The Poems, ed.

A. R. Waller; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905; pp. 155-56)

Like Denham's, however, Cowley's practice was not as free as his theory.

John Dryden recognized the satiric possibilities of imitation, as is suggested in his definition in the Preface to his Translations from Ovid's Epistles (1680):

an endeavour of a later poet to write like one who has written before him, on the same subject . . . . to write as he supposes that writer would have done, had he lived in our age, and in our country.

(John Dryden, Essays, ed. W. H. Hudson; London: J. M. Dent, 1954; pp. 151-53)

But in practice Dryden too is mainly a translator. He did "English" Sir William Soames' translation of Boileau's Art of Poetry (1680-81), but his modernizing here is mechanical, not creative. And in Dryden's own work, without collaborators, when he does update an ancient poem, he commonly just transfers the occasion of the poem, with very little internal up-dating, certainly with very little interpolation of his personal attitudes. Horace's Ode III, Book I, to Virgil on a journey, Dryden applies to a trip to be taken by the Earl of Roscommon. But there the modernizing ends. The beauties of his imitation--as of his



translation--lie mainly in his turns of phrase.

Dryden's attitude toward imitation undergoes an interesting change. In 1680 he writes that

imitation of an author is the most advantageous way for a translator to show himself, but the greatest wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead.

(Ibid., p. 153)

This Dryden wrote while still smarting under Rochester's rather mild criticism in his "Allusion" to Horace's Tenth Satire. In his Preface to Sylvae (1685), published one year after Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse, Dryden is more tolerant:

I have many times exceeded my Commission; for I have both added and omitted, and even sometimes very boldly made such expositions of my Authors, as no Dutch Commentator will forgive me. Perhaps, in such particular passages, I have thought that I discover'd some beauty yet undiscover'd by those Pedants, which none but a Poet could have found . . . . Where I have enlarg'd them I desire the false Criticks would not always trink that those thoughts are wholly mine, but that either they are secretly in the Poet, or may be fairly deduc'd from him; or at least, if both these considerations should fail, that my own is of a piece with his, and that if he were living, and an Englishman, they are such as he would probably have written.

(John Dryden, The Poems, ed. John Sargeaunt; London: Oxford University Press, 1929; p. 383)

In 1687 Dryden has grown even more tolerant of free translation. He praises Henry Higden's translation of Juvenal's Tenth Satire:

Yet You, my Friend, have temper'd him so well,  
You make him Smile in spite of all his Zeal:  
An Art peculiar to your Self alone,  
To joyn the Vertues of Two stiles in One.

(Ibid., p. 164)

30. Pope's regard for Rochester is suggested by his lines of 1739 on Rochester's bed ("With no poetic ardor fired," The Poems, ed. H. W. Boynton; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1931; pp. 126-27). Pope wrote "Upon Silence" in emulation of the Earl's "Upon Nothing" (Ibid., pp. 17-18). Finally, when Pope edited Sheffield's Works in 1723, he freely improved the sketch of Rochester in Sheffield's Essay Upon Satyr. Pope adds the line "his very vices shine," replaces Sheffield's references to Rochester's "want of wit" and "affected . . . wit" to "sprightly wit," and omits altogether this description of Rochester:

To every face he cringes when he speaks,  
But when the back is turn'd the head he breaks.

See Benjamin Boyce, The Character Sketches in Pope's Poems (Durham: Duke University Press, 1962), pp. 85ff.

Pope's treatment of old writings varies from translation (Ovid and Homer, Poems, pp. 60-67, 261-635) through paraphrase (Chaucer, Ibid., pp. 35-59) through versification (Donne's satires, Ibid., 202-207) to imitation, both of a particular Classical work (Horace's satires, Ibid., pp. 182-217) and of a writer's general tone and subject matter (Pope's youthful imitations of Chaucer, Spenser, Waller, Cowley, Rochester, Dorset, and Swift: Ibid., pp. 15-18). The degree to which





Pope modernizes the allusions in his classical imitation may derive from the practical example of Rochester.

31. Swift wrote at least eight imitations of Horace, in which--as Rochester did earlier--he leaves the personal stamp of the imitator on the work. In the imitation of Horace's Ode 7, Book II, Swift adds to his sketch of Steele such details as Steele's reputation as a dispenser of advice, a detail with no parallel in the original. Swift also suggests his personal attitude toward Steele:

Thou pompously wilt let us know  
What all the world knew long ago . . .  
(Swift, The Poems, ed. Joseph Horrell;  
2 vols. Moses Library, London: Routledge and  
Kegan Paul, 1958; II, p. 695)  
All this is foreign to thy walk:  
Thy genius has perhaps a knack  
At trudging in a beaten track . . . .  
(Ibid., p. 695)

Occasionally Swift attempts an ironic interplay between model and imitation. The military imagery in Horace's ode Swift sinks into the following passage:

But now the Senate bid things sit  
And thou at Stockbridge wert not sit;  
Must feel thy eloquence and fire,  
Approve they schemes, try wit and fire,  
Thee with immortal honours crown,  
While, patriot-like, thou'lt strut and frown.  
(Ibid., p. 696)

Horace closes the ode with a curt call for a lighter tone. Swift keeps the theme but adds nontemporalizing detail:

Then let us both in time grow wise,  
Nor higher than our talents rise;  
To some snug cellar let's repair  
From duns and debts, and drown our care;  
Now quaff of honest ale a quart,  
Now venture at a pint of port;  
With which inspir'd, we'll club each night  
Some tender sonnet to indite,  
And with Tom D'Urfey, Phillips, Dennis,  
Immortalize our Dols and Jennys.  
(Ibid., p. 698)

Samuel Johnson's greatest poems are both imitations: London, an imitation of Juvenal's third satire; and On the Vanity of Human Wishes, an imitation of Juvenal's tenth. Johnson's preference for Juvenal instead of Horace is characteristic. As Johnson notes in his Life of Dryden, "the peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and stateliness, of pointed sentences, and declamatory grandeur" (op. cit., II, p. 249). Horace's poems were more often occasional than general declamations. Hence, perhaps, Dryden's preference for Horace.

In London Johnson delivers the same attack on city life as Juvenal does. But where Juvenal follows his citizen through a day of peril and ordeal, Johnson omits all suggestion of chronological order: his effect is of appropriate disorder. Johnson also swings the emphasis from the





social abuse to the political, attacking the Walpole government for its excise laws, the abuse of pensions, the tyrannic licensing laws, and the general servility of the populace. Johnson's Vanity is less angry, calmer, more general in its description, and as a result, closer to the Juvenalian stateliness than London is. Johnson keeps Juvenal's Xerxes as the personification of kingly vainglory, but replaces Sejanus with Wolesey, Hannibal with Charles XII of Sweden, and the figure of the orator with the figure of the scholar as the contemporary ideal. In theme Johnson's only disagreement with Juvenal is in religious attitude. Idler 41 explains Johnson's dissatisfaction with Stoicism. Johnson would contend that one can consider in "rational tranquility" the loss of one's friends and one's own death, only if he believes in a god and in a paradisaal after-life. So Johnson severely tempers Juvenal's conclusion that man postulates an infinite after-life only because of his own helpless and pathetic limits. Johnson contends man's faith proves his immortality. So Johnson's Stoicism is more Christian than Juvenal's and more optimistic of reward. Love, patience, and faith are the goods that

for man the laws of heav'n ordain,  
These goods he grants, who grants the pow'r to gain;  
With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,  
And makes the happiness she does not find.

(Johnson, The Poems; ed. D. N. Smith and  
E. L. McAdam, Oxford: Clarendon Press,  
1951; p. 48)

Dryden translates the parallel passage as follows:

Fortune was never worshipp'd by the Wise;  
But, set aloft by Fools, usurps the Skies.

(Dryden, The Poems, p. 570)

31. Pound more than Robert Lowell exploits the fact of translation, setting up a dramatic situation, as it were, between the two voices, the original and the model. Apart from this similarity in translation technique, Pound was among the first twentieth-century critics to recall with admiration the Earl's lyric voice (The ABC of Reading; New York: New Directions, 1960; pp. 79, 152, 154, 156-57, 159) as well as the satiric (Ibid., p. 172).

### CHAPTER III

1. For example, it seems unlikely that Rochester wrote "The Encouragement," sometimes attributed to him:

'Tis the Arabian Bird alone  
Lives Chast, because there is but One:  
But had kind Nature made them Two,  
They would like Doves and Sparrows do.

(Hayward, p. 304)

If Rochester did write this verse, it was probably just a transcription from memory of a verse from Drayton's "Heroic Epistle" from King John to Matilda:



Th'Arabian bird which never is but one,  
 Is only chaste, because she is alone:  
 But had our mother nature made them two;  
 They would have done as Doves and Sparrows do.  
 (quoted by Hayward, p. 401)

Bruce Berlind calls Rochester's verse a "variation" on Drayton (op. cit., p. 66). Cf. Prinz, op. cit., p. 147.

2. David Vieth, Attribution, p. 287.

3. All quotations from Boileau are from the following edition: Boileau-Despréaux, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. par A. C. Gidel (4 vols., Paris: Garnier Frères, 1870).

4. cf. Rochester's "Satire Against Mankind":

Witts are treated just like common Whores,  
 First they're enjoy'd, and then kickt out of Doores.  
 (Pinto, Poems, p. 119)

5. Samuel Johnson remarks: "Of the Satire Against Man, Rochester can claim only what remains when all Boileau's part is taken away" (Lives, op. cit., I, p. 130). S. F. Crocker claims, "Rochester's only obligation to Boileau seems to be the suggestion of setting off the instinctive wisdom of the animals against man's so-called reason" ("Rochester's Satire Against Mankind," West Va. University Studies, III [1937], p. 73). These set the battle-lines: the other combatants are listed in the bibliography.

6. Thomas Rymer, The Critical Works, ed. by C. A. Zimansky (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), pp. 80-81.

7. Thus, after the misanthrope's first outburst, that clearly sets forth the reasons Rochester dislikes the vain rationalist, the interlocutor, Rochester's "formal Band, and Beard," enquires,  
 What rage ferments in your degen'rate mind,  
 To make you rail at Reason, and Mankind?  
 (ll. 58-59)

8. John F. Moore makes this point, that Boileau's tone is that of the urbane conversationalist, Rochester's that of the prosecuting attorney ("The Originality of Rochester's Satire Against Mankind," PMLA, LVIII [1943], p. 397). By compressing and concentrating the interlocutor's speech, furthermore, Rochester makes him seem more ridiculous, more vain, than the doctor in Boileau.

9. TLS, Thursday, May 9, 1935, p. 301. The poem is found in Hayward, attributed to Rochester (p. 105), but not in Pinto or Thorpe. The poem is one of several from the 1707 edition that Pinto arbitrarily excludes from the Rochester canon.

From the 1707 edition of Rochester, Pinto admits to the canon "Gentle Reproofs," "Tunbridge Wells" and the "History of Insipids." He even prefers the 1707 edition of "Tunbridge Wells" over an earlier one (Pinto, Poems, p. 189). But for no evident reason he denies the





validity of four poems attributed to Rochester in 1707: "Must I with Patience," "Pindarick," "Satire on King Charles for which Rochester was Banished," and "Rochester's Farewell." These Pinto at least prints in his appendix of poems of doubtful authorship. However, Pinto omits entirely sixteen poems from the 1707 edition, of which ten had previous textual authorities "in several cases identical with those for poems which Pinto accepts as Rochester's" (Berlind, op. cit., p. 287).

Such inconsistencies as this, together with a host of typographical and textual errors, make the Pinto edition of Rochester inadequate. Thorpe's facsimile edition of the 1680 Poems on Several Occasions can not be considered completely representative of Rochester's work. For one thing, although Rochester had a considerable fame for writing explicit satire against the king, no satire against Charles II appears in the 1680 edition, by Rochester or by anyone else. Therefore the 1685, 1691 and even 1707 additions to the canon should not be automatically discounted. Hayward's edition of Rochester, although it too has been ~~demonstrated~~ to be unscholarly and often slipshod, provides the widest range of Rochester's poems. A new edition fuller and with better notes than have been thus far provided, is required. For detailed correction of Pinto's edition of Rochester, see Berlind, op. cit., pp. 281-297.

10. The fact of translation, the fact that the later poem is read in the light of the earlier, provides the reader with "a framework-metaphor enclosing the whole of each poem and exerting the force of a serious wit at many local points" (Macdonald Emslie, "Johnson's Satires and 'The Proper Wit of Poetry'," Cambridge Journal, VII [1954], p. 360).

11. cf. Rochester's "Tunbridge Wells":

Bless me! thought I, what Thing is Man, that thus  
In all his Shapes, he is ridiculous.  
Our selves with noise of Reason do we please  
In vain, Humanity's our worst Disease.

(Pinto, Poems, p. 92)

The first three lines here may be a parody of Hamlet's "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty, in form and moving! How express and admirable in action! How like an angel in apprehension! How like a god! . . ." (II, ii, 315-18). Hamlet, in turn, sounds very much like the "formal Band, and Beard" of Rochester's "Satire Against Mankind."

12. The poem is another from the 1707 edition of Rochester that Pinto arbitrarily excludes from his collection. Hayward and Wilson agree on Rochester's authorship (J. H. Wilson, Court Wits, p. 80).

13. Berlind, Ibid., p. 87. Hayward calls the poem an imitation of Cowley (op. cit., p. 376); Wilson, of Anacreon (Court Wits, p. 89).

14. Abraham Cowley, The Poems, p. 51. Rochester's well-known admiration for Cowley is detailed in Vieth's "Rochester and Cowley," TLS, October 12, 1951, p. 645.

15. Anacreontea, Vol. II, Part ii, p. 40.





16. For a close parallel from a work known to be Rochester's, see Vieth, Attribution, p. 113.

17. Francis Quarles, The Emblems, ed. by Rev. George Gilfillan (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1857), pp. 281-83, 292-94.

18. Pinto includes the poem among those of doubtful authorship, as the only claim to the Earl's authorship is the attribution in the 1707 and 1709 editions. Prinz contends that had the poem been Rochester's, Tonson would have included it in his collection (Prinz, op. cit., p. 114). Most modern anthologists attribute the poem to Rochester, on account of its beauty, perhaps. I think the best evidence for the Earl's authorship is the sharp changes the poet makes in rewriting the poem. For a variant on Pinto's punctuation, see Enthusiast, pp. 56-57.

19. ed. by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 492.

20. V. de Sola Pinto, Enthusiast, p. 56.

21. Joe Lee Davis, "Criticism and Parody," Thought, XXVI (1951), p. 181.

22. For the proof of Scroope's authorship of "I cannot change as others do," see Vieth, Attribution, pp. 231-38. The poem was formerly considered one of Rochester's finest lyrics, and printed as the Earl's by Hayward, Quilter Johns, and Pinto. Wilson and Thorpe accepted it as Rochester's. "I swive as well as others do," however, was ignored: Hayward, Johns, and Wilson attributed it to Rochester but Prinz and Thorpe did not. Vieth's assignment of the two poems to the feud between Scroope and Rochester makes particular notice of the stress in the "Mock Song" on the whorish qualities of the woman, who Vieth suggests is Scroope's former mistress--and a subject of Rochester's ridicule elsewhere--Cary Frazier.

23. Cf. Vieth, Ibid., pp. 112-13.

#### CHAPTER IV

1. Montague Summers, The Playhouse of Pepys (London: Kegan Paul, 1935), pp. 290, 330.

2. Robert Wolseley excuses the play as unfinished at Rochester's death. "Preface to Rochester's Valentinian" (1685), Spingarn, op. cit., III, p. 1.

3. Summers, op. cit., pp. 291, 330. Relying too heavily upon Wolseley's excuse, J. H. Wilson suggests the first production was in 1684 (Court Wits, p. 169).



4. For references to Fletcher's Valentinian, act and scene locations are given because the play has been published on more than one occasion. References to Rochester's version are by page number because the Hayward edition of Rochester's works is the only publication of the play to date.

5. A. C. Sprague, Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), p. 168.

6. Ibid., p. 167.

7. Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Restoration Drama: 1660-1700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p. 166.

8. However, because the quarto publication was made from a prompter's copy (Summers, loc. cit.), the reader must check--and trust--Hayward's notes, in which he compares the quarto text with a manuscript.

9. Summers provides a detailed report on homosexuality as a theme and as a practice in the Restoration theatre, op. cit., pp. 292-93.

10. "Satiric Elements in Rochester's Valentinian," PQ, XVI (1937), p. 44.

11. Hayward, Works, p. xiii: BM Add. MSS. 28692.

12. Ibid., p. 196:

Well! first or last all Women must be won--  
 "It is their Fate and cannot be withstood  
 "The wise do still comply with Flesh and Blood;  
 "Or if through peevish Honour Nature fail  
 "They do but lose their Thanks--Art will prevail."

13. Indeed Rochester's Maximus has a Hamlet-like tendency to second-think himself out of action. Occasionally he seems to echo Hamlet's argument:

Hold me you Gods; and judge our Passions rightly,  
 Lest I should kill him: kill this luxurious Worm,  
 Ere yet a thought of Danger has awak'd him.

(Hayward, p. 235)

And am I then reveng'd,  
 To take him in the purging of his soul,  
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage?  
 No!

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.

(Hamlet, III, iii, 84-88)

Of course, Hamlet's concern is with his step-father's salvation; Maximus wants the king tortured by fear before he dies.

14. G. K. Chesterton quotes Thackeray's observation that "Charles II was a rascal but not a snob." Chesterton continues: "The problem of Charles II consists in this, that he has scarcely a moral virtue to his name, and yet he attracts us morally" (Essays and Poems, ed. Wilfrid





Sheed; Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1958; p. 97).

15. Pinto, Poems, p. 136. Cf. Vieth, Attribution, pp. 178, 187, 194, 202. Coincidentally, Chesterton suggests that Charles II "emphatically was, the only Stuart who really achieved despotism . . . . It is indeed a form of slavery, and it is the despot who is the slave" (op. cit., p. 100).

16. Wilson demonstrates the close parallel between Rochester's addition to the debate and Honoré D'Urfée's romance L'Astrée ("Rochester's Valentinian and Heroic Sentiment", ELH, IV [1937], pp. 265-73).

17. The suggestion in the epilogue that a woman can secretly enjoy being raped grows out of Lycinius' musings during the dance scene.

18. Hayward, Works, p. xvi. Similarly, Wilson claims "haughty Rochester felt himself superior to the theatre" (Court Wits, pp. 154-55), despite his well-known tutelage of Miss Barry.

## CHAPTER V

1. In this respect the Earl seems to follow the advice of the Earl of Roscommon:

Examine how your Humour is inclin'd,  
And which the Ruling Passion of your Mind;  
Then seek a Poet who your way do's bend,  
And chuse an Author as you chuse a Friend:  
United by this Sympathetick Bond,  
You grow Familiar, Intimate, and Fond;  
Your thoughts, your Words, your Stiles, your  
Souls agree,  
No Longer his Interpreter, but He.  
("Essay on Translated Verse," Springarn,  
op. cit., II, p. 300)

2. Pinto, Enthusiast, p. 152.

3. All quotations from Hobbes are from The English Works, ed. Sir William Molesworth (11 vols., London, 1839). The first quotation is I, 1, in IV, p. 82.

4. Ibid., I, 11, in III, p. 86.

5. Ibid., I, 4, in III, p. 25.

6. Ibid., I, 5, in III, pp. 34-37.

7. Ibid., IV, p. 32.





8. Ibid., III, pp. 42-43.

9. The raison in Boileau's man is a rough parallel to Rochester's false reason in that it makes man restless, aimless, a soul in conflict:

Mais l'homme, sans arrêt dans sa course insensée,  
Vultige incessamment de pensée en pensée:  
Son coeur, toujours flottant entre mille embarras,  
Ne sait ni ce qu'il veut, ni ce qu'il ne veut pas.  
Ce qu'un jour il abhorre, en l'autre il le souhaite.

(Boileau, II, pp. 11-12)

Rochester's "right reason" only loosely parallels Boileau's sagesse:  
une égalité d'âme

Que rien ne peut troubler, qu'aucun désir n'enflamme,  
Qui marche en ses conseils à pas plus mesurés  
Qu'un doyen au palais ne monte les degrés.

(Ibid., p. 11)

Where Boileau defines his two kinds of reason by their effects, Rochester defines his according to their function, their purpose.

10. The phrases were coined by George Boas, The Happy Beast in French Thought of the Seventeenth Century (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933).

11. The sensualist's degrading service to woman, the inversion of the proper hierarchy which Rochester seems to consider sensuality to be, also appears in the poems "Against the Charms our Ballocks have" (Thorpe, p. 73), and "The Imperfect Enjoyment" (Thorpe, espec. p. 30). In the "Satire Against Mankind," Rochester writes of "That lust of Pow'r, to which he's such a Slave" (Pinto, Poems, p. 122). In "Portsmouth's Looking Glass," that poem so strongly anticipant of Swift's Strephon satires, Rochester catalogues the Duchess' traits and concludes:

These are your Master-strokes of Beauty,  
That keep poor Rowley to hard Duty . . . .

(Hayward, p. 103)

Rowley, of course, refers to Charles, nicknamed Rowley after one of his more reliable stud horses. The name of Rochester's Bajazet also suggests a king in bondage, recalling the caged emperor in Marlowe's Tamburlaine who although caged, continues to brag and to rant.

12. Wilson, Court Wits, p. 129.

13. Alan Bevan, "Poetry and Politics in Restoration England," Dalhousie Review, XXXIX (1959-60), pp. 323-24. Wilson (Wits, p. 125) claims that "in his later years, Rochester joined with Dorset in sneering with superior impartiality at King and Parliament, Whig and Tory." Vieth (Attribution, p. 195) refers to the Journals of the House of Lords for proof that "during 1679, Rochester voted consistently with the Whig leaders." Rochester's satires are certainly, as Prinz describes them, "the precise expression of the public agitation aroused by the scandalous doings at court" (op. cit., p. 121).

14. Enthusiast, p. 96.



15. One recalls Rochester's comparison of woman to quicksand in "The Nature of Women" (Hayward, pp. 110-13) and in "A Satire Against Marriage" (Hayward, pp. 93-95), where the woman-as-bog theme echoes the Platonic effluence:

if he must pay Nature's Debt in kind,  
To Check his eager Passions, let him find  
Some willing Female out, what tho' she be  
The very Dregs and Scum of Infamy?  
Tho' she be Linsey Woolsey Bawd and Whore,  
Close stool to Venus, Nature's Common Shore . . . .

In "How blest was the Created State" (Pinto, Poems, pp. 23-24), Rochester makes the unique suggestion that man's sexual hunger is his punishment for the fall from grace. Prelapsarian man was physically satisfiable:

Naked, beneath cool Shades, they lay,  
Enjoyment waited on Desire:  
Each Member did their Wills obey,  
Nor could a Wish set Pleasure higher.

But we, poor Slaves to Hope and Fear,  
Are never of our Joys secure:  
They lessen still as they draw near,  
And none but dull Delights endure.

Conversely Rochester attributes unlimited virility to prelapsarian man. Rochester longs for unlimited virility in Actus Prima, Scena Prima and the 1697 "Perfect Enjoyment." In this development of the adoration motif in the English lyric, Rochester explicitly equates virility and beatification, the love-act and religious values. The disguise of sensuality in religion, then, parallels Rochester's mock-heroism (cf. Berlind, op. cit., pp. 101-02).

Rochester's favorite representation of man is in terms of insatiable hunger, such as the sketches of the King and the Duchess of Cleveland in "A Satyr Which the King took out of his Pocket" (Hayward, pp. 91-93). Rochester's characterisation of the sex-starved female reflects his own sexual appetite and his own tragic inability to find satiation. The sex-starved female appears in "The Virgin's Desire" (Hayward, p. 110), "The Nature of Women, A Satyr" (Hayward, pp. 110-13), "Signior Dildoe" (Hayward, pp. 128-31), and "The Ramble in St. James's Park" (Thorpe, pp. 14-19), where again the sexual hunger is described in terms of the loss of self-control:

Woman that Slave to her own Appetite,  
That does in nothing Just or Good Delight . . . .

Rochester's image of Celia's trenches in the translation of Ovid's ninth elegy belongs to another recurrent theme in Rochester, a variation on the theme of sexual starvation, the representation of woman as a characterless, passive, bottomless receptacle, "A Passive Pot for Fools to spend in" (Thorpe, p. 17). In a song Rochester tells his mistress

If Rivall bottle you'll allow  
I'll suffer rivall fopp . . . .

(Pinto, Poems, p. 167)

(For a variant version, see Thorpe, pp. 68-69). The image anticipates the bottles crying for their corks in Pope's Rape of the Lock. In Rochester's recurring image converge the ideas of insatiable woman,





the indiscriminately fornicating man, and the characterless, mechanical activity to which the sexual act has degenerated. As Rochester's Artemisa complains to Cloe:

Our silly Sex, who, born like Monarchs, free, )  
 Turn Gipsies for a meaner Liberty; )  
 And hate Restraint, tho' but from Infamy: )  
 That call whatever is not common nice, )  
 And, deaf to Nature's Rule, or Love's advice, )  
 Forsake the Pleasure to pursue the Vice. )  
 To an exact Perfection they have brought  
 The action Love; the passion is forgot.  
 'Tis below Wit, they tell you, to admire;  
 And ev'n without approving they desire.  
 Their private Wish obeys the publick Voice,  
 'Twixt good and bad whimsey decides, not choice.

(Pinto, Poems, p. 81)

So too in Rochester's "Satyr Against Marriage" (Hayward, pp. 93-95) and "On a False Mistress" (Hayward, pp. 106-07).

A recurring variation on the theme of insatiability is Rochester's imagery of total fornication. The image may hark back to Shakespeare's description of Cressida:

There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
 Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out  
 At every joint and motive of her body.

(Troilus and Cressida, IV, v, 55-57)

It may be indebted to the extravagance of the Cavalier conventions, as typified by Lovelace's

Againe,  
 Thou witty Cruell Wanton now againe,  
 Through ev'ry Veine,  
 Hurle all your lightning, and strike ev'ry Dart,  
 Againe . . . .

(The Poems, ed. by C. H. Wilkinson;  
 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930; p. 83)

But in Rochester the image of total fornication has two serious implications. First there is the idea of a man totally committed to the senses, totally ruled by his passion. As in "As Cloris full of harmless thoughts"--

A sudden passion seiz'd her Heart,  
 In spite of her disdain;  
 She found a Pulse in ev'ry part,  
 And Love in ev'ry Vein . . .

(Pinto, Poems, p. 30)

--so too in "At the Sight of my Phyllis, from every Part" (Hayward, p. 109), the image is of man totally impelled by sexual hunger:

So strange a Distemper sure Love cannot bring,  
 To my Knowledge Love was a quieter Thing,  
 So gentle and tame, that he never was known  
 So much as to wake me when I lay alone.  
 But the Boy is much grown, and so alter'd of late,  
 He's become a more furious Passion, than Hate . . . .

More commonly the image of total fornication represents a striving toward self-obliteration, the futile attempt by sensual man to escape





through the sensual experience the limits of the flesh. So, in "The Imperfect Enjoyment":

In liquid Raptures, I dissolve all o're,  
Melt into Sperme, and spend at ev'ry Pore:  
A touch from any part of her had don't,  
Her Hand, her Foot, her very look's a Cunt.  
(Thorpe, p. 28)

As Donne in "The Bait" watches himself watch his love, Rochester in his poetry about the sexual experience futilely tries to shake off the physical limits on his pleasure and the constant awareness that his pleasure is merely physical and momentary.

Where Swift fixes upon the humbling reality of the human excrement, Rochester fixes upon the equally basic condition of hunger. This note of hungry, harsh reality interrupts almost every convention Rochester picks up.

The point about Rochester's self-dissatisfaction opens into the broader consideration of Rochester as a self-satirist. He is certainly himself within the range of criticism in Valentinian. David Vieth therefore seems on shaky footing to deny Rochester's authorship of "In the Fields of Lincolns Inn" (Thorpe, pp. 55-56), one of the finest pastoral, religious and heroic parodies of the period. Vieth is suspicious of the attribution of the poem to Rochester because the poem "satirizes the sexual prowess of a person named Strephon, which was a pastoral pseudonym commonly applied to Rochester" (Attribution, p. 87). Certainly the poem refers to Rochester. But the poem could still have been written by Rochester, who elsewhere undercuts the validity of his creed and so might be expected to poke mild fun at himself. The Strephon of the poem--as Vieth himself admits--"possesses extraordinary qualifications" (Ibid., p. 173):

Strephon's, was a handful longer,  
Stiffly propt with eager Lust;  
None for Champion, was more stronger . . . .  
(Thorpe, p. 55)

Someone else's attack on Rochester would have charged him with sexual feebleness, to strike the painful blow. Rochester seems to be poking fun at his own heroic pose. The athletic contest in the fields or the song-fest of conventional pastoral poetry becomes a public tumble under a skimpy blanket behind an inn:

In the Fields of Lincolns Inn,  
Underneath a tatter'd Blanket,  
On a Flock-Bed, God be thanked,  
Feats of Active Love were seen.

The stanza has everything, from lust to voyeurism to a parody of pastoral thanksgiving. The poem must be Rochester's. With the possible exception of Etherege and Sackville, no other Restoration wit but Rochester had a fine enough ear and was as attentive of rhythm so skilfully to gather and then to dispel the seriousness in the second stanza:

Phillis, who you know loves Swiving,  
As the Gods love pious Pray'rs;  
Lay most pensively contriving,  
How to Fuck with Pricks by Pairs.



Furthermore, the fact that Restoration pseudo-pastoralists commonly referred to Rochester as Strephon raises an interesting possibility in the reading of two of Swift's verses, a possibility that on the one hand suggests that Swift had a better understanding of the Earl than most modern readers do and, on the other, that Swift's view of Rochester may parallel Swift's ridicule of Gulliver at the end of the Travels. The hero of both "The Lady's Dressing Room" (Poems, I, pp. 243-47) and "Strephon to Chloe" (Ibid., I, pp. 250-59) is named Strephon. In both cases the hero is a young swain who becomes disillusioned with the beauty of his beloved when he catches an unguarded view of her. Swift may intend Strephon to represent Rochester. Two passages in particular could describe Rochester's foray behind the locked doors of convention and pretension into tawdry truth, and--more important--the debilitating disillusion that resulted:

Strephon, who found the Room was void,  
And Betty otherwise employ'd,  
Stole in, and took a strick Survey  
Of all the Litter, as it lay:

. . . . .  
In such a Case, few Words are best,  
And Strephon bids us guess the rest;  
But swears how damnably the men lye,  
In calling Caelia sweet and cleanly.

(Ibid., I, p. 243)

I pity wretched Strephon, blind  
To all the Charms of Woman-kind.  
Should I the Queen of Love refuse,  
Because she rose from stinking Ooze?  
To him that looks behind the Scene,  
Satira's but some pocky Quean.

(Ibid., I, p. 247)

The point is that of Rochester in "Satire Against Mankind":  
His wisdom did his happiness destroy,  
Aiming to know what World he shou'd enjoy.

(Pinto, Poems, p. 119)

16. In TLS, Oct. 12, 1951, p. 695, David Vieth reports that in a letter Rochester quotes the following from Abraham Cowley's translation of Martial:

Is there a man yee gods whome I doe hate  
Dependence & Attendance bee his fate  
Lett him bee busy still & in a crowde  
And very much a slave & very proude.

cf. Cowley, Essays, pp. 86-87.

17. In his satire on "The Nature of Women" (Hayward, pp. 110-13), Rochester associates lechery with laziness:

Her Meat and Sauce she does for Lechery chuse  
And does in Laziness delight the more,  
Because by that, she is provok'd to Whore.

Rochester's Maim'd Debauchee speaks of

the pleasing Billows of debauch,  
On the dull Shore of lazy temperance.

(Thorpe, p. 33)





The significance of this torpor suggests an ambiguity in the post-boy's reply to Rochester's enquiry of the quickest way to Hell:

Ne'er stir,

The readiest way, my Lord's by Rochester.

(This pun is one clear advantage that the 1674 text--in Pinto, Enthusiast, p. 164--has over the 1684 transcript [Ibid., p. 235]).

18. "Nobility and Gentry in the Early Eighteenth Century," History Today, December, 1955, p. 817.

19. The Debauchee poem is quoted from the Thorpe edition because the Pinto is Bowdlerized. In the 1680 edition, "The Maim'd Debauchee" is followed by "The Argument," which seems intended to exemplify the "handsome ills" by the debauched Rochester's contrivance done. Such coherence between the poems makes the 1680 edition far better organised as a whole than anthologies of the period commonly were. cf. below, n. 25.

20. Op. cit., pp. 106-07.

21. While Donne deals often with death but rarely with aging, Rochester frequently deals with the aging process, particularly as a kind of death in life where the sensualist eventually finds himself even without the momentary pleasures of the senses. Old age images the failure of the senses. Rochester's verse abounds with debilitated characters. As Berman notes, the hostess in "Timon," the Maim'd Debauchee, the Ancient Lover of the young girl's Song, the ubiquitous Imperfect Enjoyer, "all are images of the dead ideal" (op. cit., p. 365).

22. Prof. F. Bruser has well describ'd the structure of much of the Earl's work, in an unfortunately little-read study:

The relation of form to content in the lyrics is not consonance but tension . . . . While he is at some pains to evoke the traditional responses of Petrarchan and pastoral, heroic and courtly verse, he does so for the fierce joy of disintegration . . . . The piquancy of Rochester's pastorals derives largely from the subtle interplay of the traditional and the real. Basically, this is the structure of all the lyrics.

("Disproportion: A Study of Rochester's Verse," UTQ, XV [1946], pp. 390-91)

The pastoral idyll, as Martha Hale Shackelford defines it, tries "to effect again that ever-necessary reconciliation of man with the simplicity of his own being" ("A Definition of the Pastoral Idyll," PMLA, XIX [1904], p. 592). To Rochester the pastoral offered a false, an ineffective kind of reconciliation, the illusion of innocence where none abides.

23. Pinto, "John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester," The Pelican Guide to English Literature, Vol. IV: From Dryden to Johnson, ed. Boris Ford (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1960), p. 147.





24. Rochester's finest pastoral parody is "Fair Cloris in a Pig-  
Stye lay" (Pinto, Poems, pp. 32-33). The opening is brilliant in its  
conciseness and in its detailed suggestiveness:

Fair Cloris in a Pig-Stye lay  
Her tender Herd lay by her:  
She slept, in murmuring gruntlings they,  
Complaining of the scorching Day,  
Her slumbers thus inspire.

Thorpe's edition of the 1680 text provides better punctuation in the  
third line, balancing Cloris' activity with the pigs' and suggesting  
the similarity between their sounds:

She slept in murm'ring gruntlings, they  
Complaining of the scorching Day,  
Her slumbers thus inspire.

(Thorpe, p. 61)

Rochester's Cloris sleeps oblivious--accustomed?--to the grunting of  
"Her tender Herd"--gallantly unspecified further, the denizens of  
the pig-stye--and oblivious to the heat, presumably hers as well as the  
day's.

Even in her dream the innocent miss implies that her chastity  
would be taken only by force. Even in her dream her downfall is due  
to her finer sentiments, her (fatuous, of course) concern for her  
"Bosome Pig" that the swain reports to be in distress. She dreams  
that she is undone by a particular swain, so the dream smacks of wish-  
fulfilment. The swain's use of her courtly term "abhorr'd suggests  
the swain's impatience with her courtly airs, her impatience with  
them as well, perhaps:

My self had try'd to set him free,  
Rather than brought the Newes:  
But I am so abhorr'd by thee,  
That ev'n thy Darlings life from me,  
I know thou woud'st refuse.

In the last stanza Rochester resolves the tension between Cloris'  
waking airs and innocence and her true needs and desires, which are  
recognized only in her dream. She dreams she was taken forcibly by  
the man she has been denying in real life:

Frighted she wakes, and waking Friggs,  
Nature thus kindly eas'd,  
In dreams rais'd by her murm'ring Piggs,  
And her own Thumb between her Legs,  
She innocent and pleas'd.

(Thorpe, p. 62; cf. Pinto, Poems, p. 173)

25. Berman notes that Rochester frequently describes his mistress  
as a paradigm of nature, all-receiving, all-dispensing:

Throughout his poems the theme of whoredom is connected to  
the great principles of Nature. It is the universal nexus,  
and takes the place of what Cassirer called the 'limitless  
power of love which begets both the intelligible and the  
sensible world.'

(Berman, op. cit., p. 361)

"There's something gen'rous in meer Lust," Rochester observes in his  
"Ramble in St. James's Park" (Thorpe, p. 17).



And in "Upon his Leaving his Mistress":

'Tis not that I'm weary grown  
Of being yours, and yours alone:  
But with what Face can I incline,  
To damn you to be only mine?  
You, whom some kinder Pow'r did fashion, )  
By merit, and by inclination, )  
The Joy at least of a whole Nation. )

. . . . .  
mov'd by an impartial Sense, )  
Favours, like Nature, you dispence, )  
With Universal Influence. )

See the kind Seed-receiving Earth,  
To ev'ry Grain affords a Birth:  
On her no Show'rs unwelcome fall,  
Her willing Womb retains 'em all.  
And shall my Celia be confin'd? )  
No, live up to thy mighty Mind; )  
And be the Mistress of Mankind. )

(Pinto, Poems, pp. 27-28)

The delicately generous woman of "Upon Leaving his Mistress" takes firmer, franker form in "A Ramble Through St. James's Park":

When your lew'd Cunt, came spewing home,  
Drencht with the Seed of half the Town.  
My Dram of Sperme, was supt up after,  
For the digestive Surfeit Water.  
Full gorged at another time,  
With a vast Meal of Nasty Slime;  
Which your devouring Cunt had drawn  
From Porters Backs, and Foot-mens Brawn.  
I was content to serve you up,  
My Ballock full, for your Grace Cup . . . .

(Thorpe, p. 17)

In the 1680 edition, this poem is followed by "A Letter fancy'd from Artemisa in the Town to Cloe in the Country," which seems to provide the palinodic rebuttal from the female point of view:

Love, the most generous passion of the Mind,  
The softest refuge innocence can find,  
The safe director of unguided Youth,  
Fraught with kind wishes and secur'd by truth;  
That Cordial drop, Heav'n in our Cup has thrown,  
To make the naus'ous draught of life go down;

. . . . .  
For none did, e're so dull, and stupid prove,  
But felt a God, and blest his pow'r in love:  
This only joy, for which poor we were made,  
Is grown like play, to be an Arrant Trade;  
The Rooks creep in, and it has got of late,  
As many little Cheats, and tricks as that:  
But what yet more a Womans heart wou'd vex,  
'Tis chiefly carry'd on by our own Sex.

(Thorpe, pp. 20-21; cf. Pinto, Poems, pp. 79f.)





Another passage from Artemisa balances this statement by the libertine speaker in "A very Heroical Epistle in Answer to Ephelia":

O happy Sultan! whom we barb'rous call,  
How much refin'd art thou above us all:  
Who envys not the joys of thy Serail?  
Thee like some God! the trembling crowd adore,  
Each Man's thy Slave, and Woman kind, thy Whore.

. . . . .

Each Female, courts thee with a wishing Eye,  
While thou with awful pride, walk'st careless by;  
Till thy kind Pledge, at last, marks out the Dame,  
Thou fancy'st most, to quench thy present flame.

(Pinto, Poems, p. 44)

Our silly Sex, who, born like Monarchs, free, )  
Turn Gipsies for a meaner Liberty; )  
And hate Restraint, tho' but from Infamy: )  
That call whatever is not common nice, )  
And, deaf to Nature's Rule, or Love's advice, )  
Forsake the Pleasure to pursue the Vice. )  
To an exact Perfection thy have brought  
The action Love; the passion is forgot.  
'Tis below Wit, they tell you, to admire;  
And ev'n without approving they desire.  
Their private Wish obeys the publick Voice,  
'Twixt good and bad whimsey decides, not choice.  
Fashions grow up for tast, at Forms they strike;  
They know what they wou'd have, not what they like.

("Artemisa to Cloe", Pinto, Poems, p. 81)

26. Jonathan Swift: Essays on his Satire (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 124.

27. The Earl of Mulgrave (Bajazet, Rochester's arch-target), Essay Upon Poetry, Spingarn, II, p. 288:

Here, as in all things else, is most unfit  
Bawdry barefac'd, that poor pretence to Wit,--  
Such nauseous Songs as the late Convert made,  
Which justly call this censure on his Shade;  
Not that warm thoughts of the transporting joy  
Can shock the Chastest or the Nicest cloy,  
But obscene words, too gross to move desire,  
Like heaps of Fuel do but choak the Fire.  
The Author's Name has undeserved praise,  
Who pall'd the appetite he meant to raise.

But as Pound notes, "Disgust with the sordid is but another expression of a sensitiveness to the finer things" (Literary Essays, ed. T. S. Eliot; London: Faber & Faber, 1960; p. 415).

28. Review by N. N. Holland, Hudson Review, XV (1962), p. 123.

29. Hence the recurrence of the theme of imperfect enjoyment in Rochester's verse. The theme of imperfect enjoyment occurs in "Naked she lay," The Maim'd Debauchee," "How blest was the created State,"





"By all Loves soft, yet mighty Pow'rs," "Actus Primus, Scena Prima," the Strephon-Daphne Dialogue, "A Song of a Young Lady to her Ancient Lover," "Fruition was the Question of Debate," "The Perfect Enjoyment," and others.

30. Op. cit., p. 387.

31. Ibid.

32. Op. cit., p. 79

## CHAPTER VI

1. Walter Allen, "Love and the Lyricist," The New Republic, Nov. 30, 1963, p. 21.

2. Rochester deserves credit at least in part for helping to swing the Augustan poetry from artificial, occasional verse to the admixture, or adulteration of epic, heroic, or classical materials with consciously modern, gross and contrasting idiom and image, for the purpose of producing a spark like that across the gap between two charged electrical poles.

(William Frost, Dryden and the Art of Translation; Yale: Yale University Press, 1955; p. 63)

## APPENDIX

1. "Poems by 'My Lord R.': Rochester vs. Radclyffe," PMLA, LXXII (1957), pp. 612-19.

2. "Insulting Beauty, you mispend" and "Too late, alas! I must confess."

3. Francis Whitfield, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

4. Prinz, op. cit., p. 110.

5. Shakespeare's Ovid, Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphosis, edited by W. H. D. Rowse (London: Centaur Classics, 1961), p. 200.

6. Ovid, Metamorphosis, with English translation by F. J. Miller (Loeb Classical Library; London: Harvard University Press, 1956, 2 vols.) II, p. 78. Golding translates the passage as follows:



this hand of myne hath wrought  
Thy death: I like a murtherer have too thy grave thee  
brought.

But what have I offended thow? onless that too have  
playd,

Or if that too have I loved, an offence it may be  
sayd.

(Op. cit., p. 205)

7. Op. cit., p. 64.

8. Op. cit., p. 30.

9. Jonson's Poems, pp. 255-56; Herrick's Works, p. 70.

10. Pinto's punctuation is less satisfactory:

Prithee, farewell: we'll meet again anon.

The necessary Thing bows, and is gone.

(Poems, p. 82)

In Artemisa's anecdote, "the necessary Thing" refers not to the Sir Plume, the fop, but to his mechanical formal departure, i.e. a kiss, which Artemisa must suffer. Her whole point is that the fop is not a "necessary thing."

11. Pinto, Enthusiast, pp. 48-49.

12. The dog, monkey and bear Rochester cites as preferable to humanity in "A Satire Against Mankind" were all primarily performing animals during the Restoration. The antiquated beauty in "Timon," of course, Rochester compares to a game-cock. And in a letter:

For my own part I'm taking pains not to die, without knowing how to live on, when I have brought it about: But most human Affairs are carried on at the same nonsensical rate, which makes me (who am now grown Superstitious) think it is a Fault to laugh at the Monkey we have here, when I compare his Condition with Mankind.

(The Rochester-Savile Letters, 1671-1680, ed.

J. H. Wilson; Columbia: Ohio State University Press, 1941; p. 60)

This may be why Rochester makes no mention of Lucina's musical skill in Valentinian. He does not want to reduce her appeal to the level of entertainment; the Puritan dislike of music may also be involved. Fletcher's Lucina plays the harp, but Rochester's doesn't. Further, when she is entertained at court with erotic songs, as a prelude to the rape, where Fletcher's Lucina tells the panders,

I like the air well;

But for the words, they are lascivious,

And over-light for ladies . . . ,

(II, v, 11.48-50)

Rochester's Lucina says,

Sir, I am no Judge

Of Musick, and the words, I thank my Gods,

I did not understand.

(Hayward, p. 43)



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